FEBRUARY 22–28, 2016 NO.1193

THE BIG ISSUE

EVERY MONDAY £2.50
A HAND UP NOT A HANDOUT

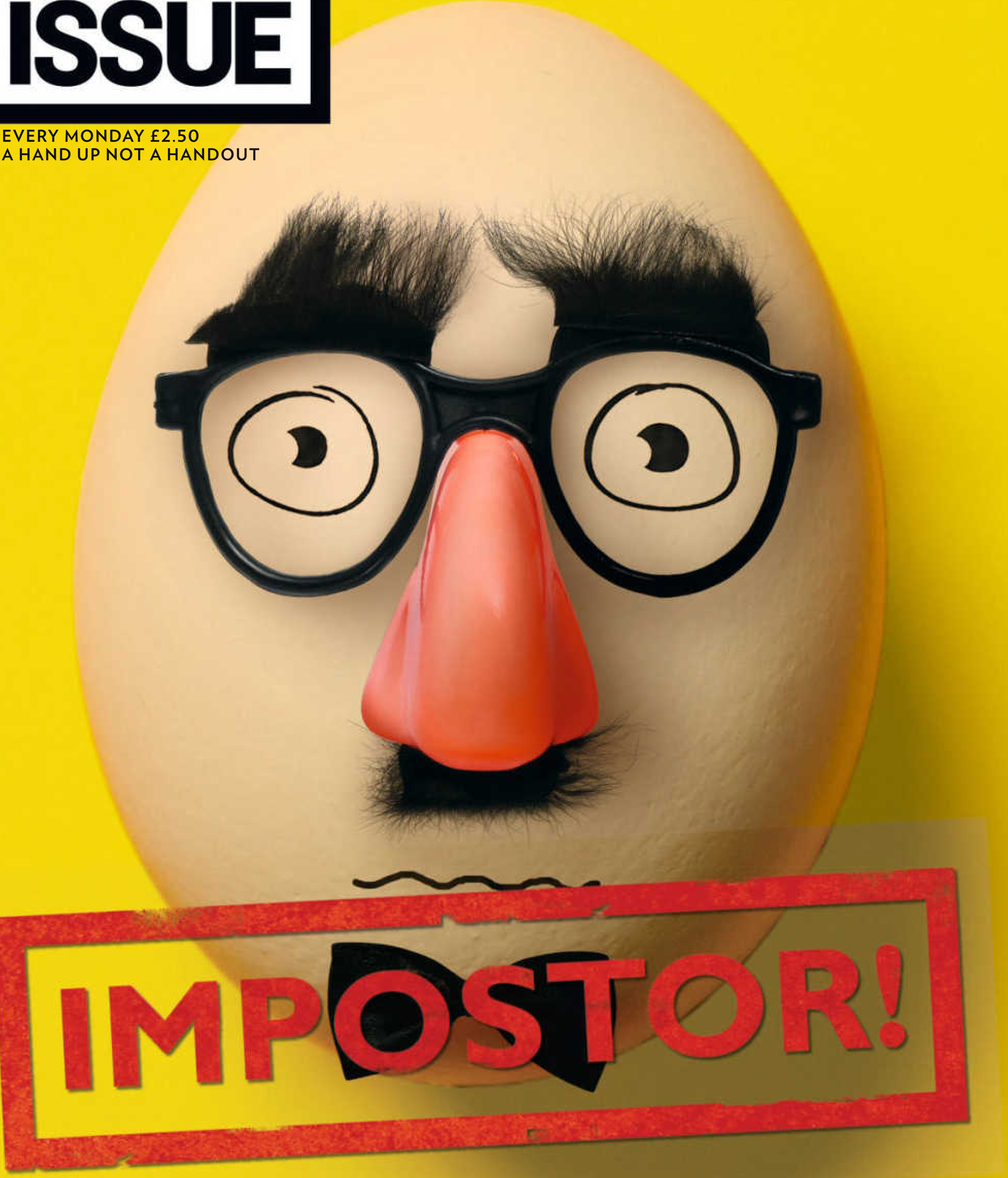

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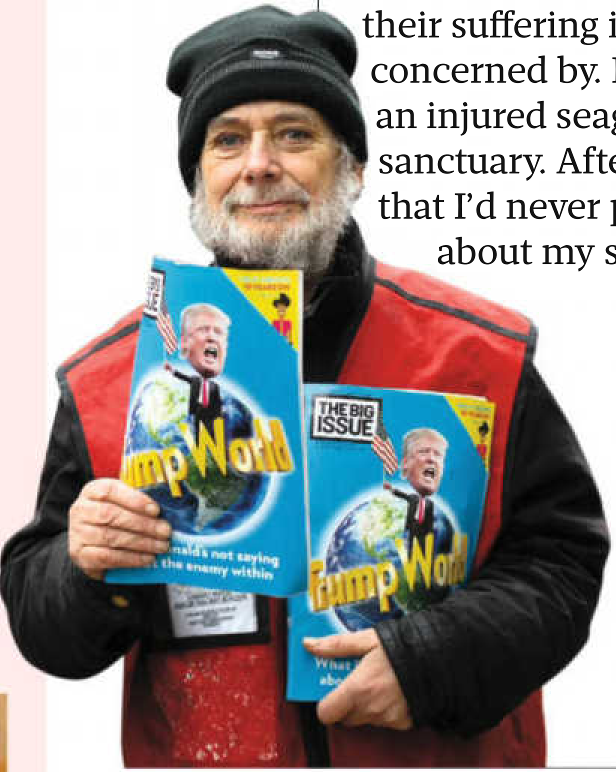
Photo: Travis Hodges

Hello, my name is Michael.

I did a PhD – a surprising number of well-educated people end up in my situation. Much of my time is spent rescuing animals because their suffering is something I'm very concerned by. It began when I found an injured seagull and took it to a sanctuary. After that I made a rule that I'd never pass by... Read more about my story on page 46.



OUR MANIFESTO

● WE BELIEVE
in a hand up, not a handout...
Which is why our sellers BUY every copy of the magazine from us for £1.25 and sell it on to you for £2.50. In this way we have helped hundreds of thousands of people to take control of their lives since 1991, and in the process created a global blueprint for social change.

● WE BELIEVE
in trade, not aid...
Which is why we ask that you ALWAYS take your copy of the magazine – it's a bloody good read and our sellers are working and need your custom.

● WE BELIEVE
poverty is indiscriminate...
Which is why we provide ANYONE whose life is blighted by poverty with the opportunity to earn a LEGITIMATE income.

● WE BELIEVE
in the right to citizenship...
Which is why The Big Issue Foundation, our charitable arm, helps sellers tackle their social and financial exclusion.

● WE BELIEVE
in prevention...
Which is why Big Issue Invest offers backing and investments between £50,000–£1.75m to social enterprises, charities and businesses which deliver social value to communities.

By Social Entrepreneurs for Social Entrepreneurs BIG ISSUE INVEST

CORRESPONDENCE

Toe-curling

I read the article about the vendor Daniel repaying his customer Joe's kindness by buying his breakfast [#CelebrateYourVendor, February 1-7]. I was pleased to read the positive responses but I am sad to say it is not like that everywhere.

The vendor who sells The Big Issue at M&S, Leicester, is Romanian. Her name is Aurora, a nice Christian lady who asks God to bless you. Her English is not very good but I have noticed over the last three years that it has gradually improved. She is always smiling no matter the weather and is always happy to see you.

One day I noticed she was wearing a pair of knitted boots, which were wet. I took her to a shop and bought her a nice pair of boots. But when she wore them to work no one wanted to buy the magazine because, and I'm quoting her: "They look at my feet and say nice boots, you go home, not need money." People didn't believe they were a gift, so she does not wear them to work. She said not to be sad because she wears them to church and the hospital.

Do people want her to stand in bare feet in the middle of winter? I do not understand why people can be so intimidating and heartless.
A concerned customer, Leicester

@jenmaybarron
If anyone needs cheering up today, the Big Issue seller at Tesco Inverurie is giving out lovely compliments!

Bird's-eye view

Recently we had a friend from Turkey stay with us at our home. Knowing that he wished to know more about life in the UK, I showed him about our home. Opening the storage cupboard in the kitchen I showed him the contents – vacuum cleaner, the spice box, the bean (pulses) box etc. One of the boxes was for the bird food. I explained that we feed the birds in our garden. His immediate reply was 'what about food for the homeless people?'. I now regularly buy a copy of The Big Issue.
Jeremy Huggins, email

Write to: **The Big Issue, Second Floor, 43 Bath St, Glasgow, G2 1HW**
Email: **letters@bigissue.com** Comment: **bigissue.com**
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COMMENT OF THE WEEK

Lift your head to see this vendor's optimism

I work in Newbury in Berkshire. There are a fair few disadvantaged people I see regularly on my trips to Tesco. Walking through the busy high street I see men in suits, women trying to speed-walk in heels and bedraggled parents on their way to work and school. There are very few who spare a second to lift their head as they are so caught up in their own lives. But there is one individual that stands out – the lovely gentlemen who sells The Big Issue outside Tesco. Despite his misfortune, he's always smiling and loves to crack a joke! I always think, wow! Despite clearly having little, being looked down upon or ignored and working a job that means being outside on your feet in the cold all day – he is still more optimistic than most of us. It was his optimism and character that brought me to buying my first Big Issue today! What an inspiring individual – I hope he never stops smiling. Given the chance, he could go far. Wishing him the best of luck.
Eve Hargreaves, Newbury

@JoannaTilley
Amazingly frank and candid interview with Tom Hollander in the @BigIssue. Unusual to read something like that.

STREET ART

@artfitzrovia
Very proud of group member Rene for her piece in the @bigissue this week. Taken at the #homeiswheretheartis exhibition!

@lilianhatesfish
People who say money can't buy happiness has probably never bought a copy of @BigIssue. Best vendors ever who will always brighten your day.

Trouble in paradise

I enjoyed John Lloyd's article [What is Utopia?, February 8-14] but was a bit shocked to see that he only defined the word eutopia as 'no place'. Every student of ancient Greek learns very early on that the suffix 'eu' also means good or well (as in English words such as eucalypt, eucharist, eugenics, euphemism). This was the point of Thomas More's title – a pun – suggesting that Eutopia was a good place but also no place.
Lloyd Fleming, email

The clever thing is that Thomas More's title, *Utopia*, can mean ou topos (no place) or eu topos (good place). No accident.
Dr Hayes, Dep of Theology/ Religion, Durham University

Re: the last paragraph of John Lloyd's article and his suggestions of how we create [utopia – ie; from within ourselves] I would like to bring his attention to the New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ. Not a popular subject today but timeless in their truth and wisdom, where these thoughts have already been voiced.
Rosalind Russell, email

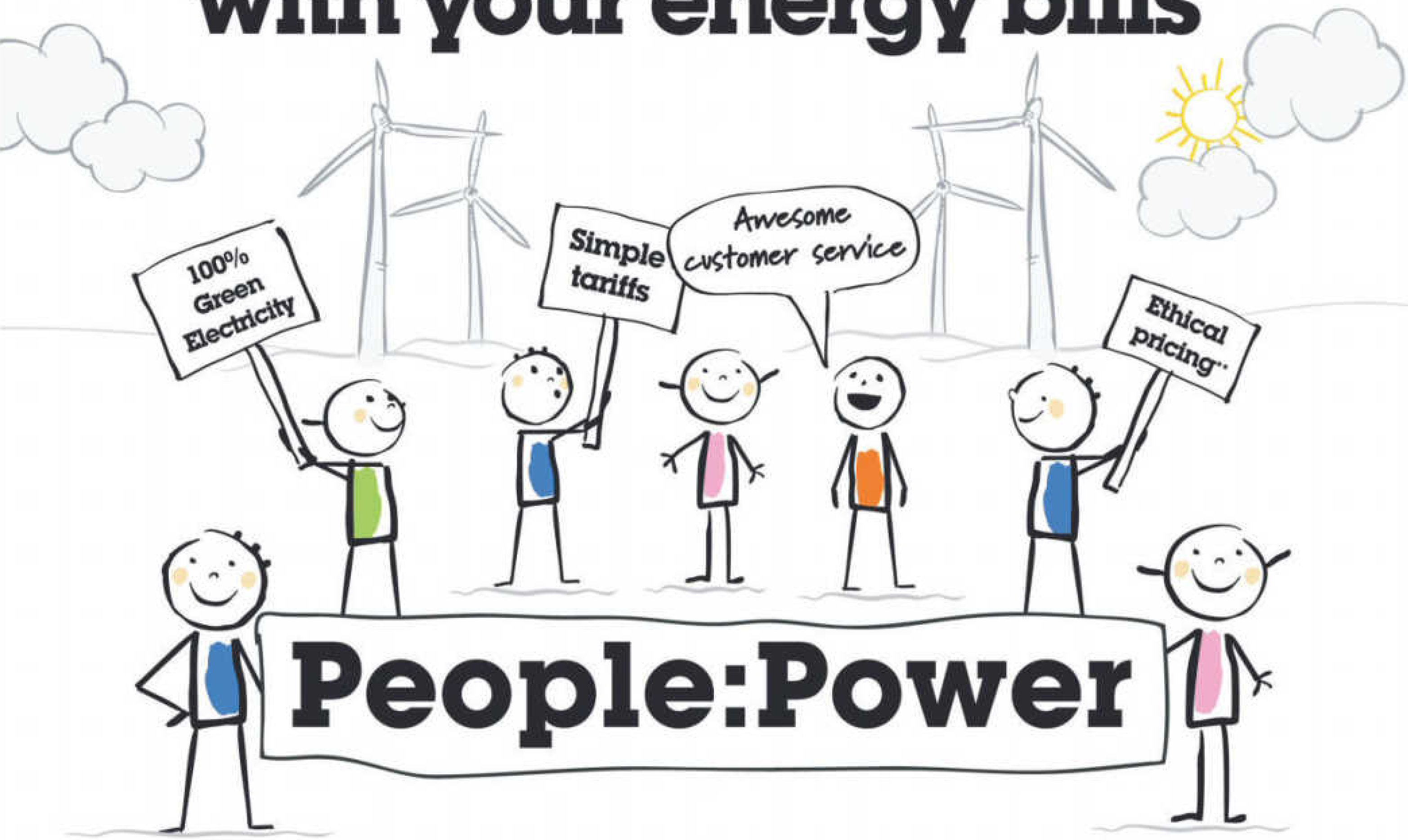
At Roman Way College every Thursday we have, as part of our human rights studies, invented a 'country' we have called Opportunityland. The six basic rules are:
- Be kind to each other
- Share resources
- Respect each other
- Education for all
- Homes for everyone
- Healthcare for all

H Griffiths, Market Harborough

Correction

Last week we featured the story of Larry Knowles who served in the RAF for 26 years before becoming homeless. The introduction stated he was a pilot but instead he rose to the rank of Chief Technician.

Make a difference with your energy bills



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THE EDITOR

Selling us down the chocolate river

Augustus Gloop had it coming. We knew it, Willy Wonka knew it and probably, deep down, Gloop knew it too.

In case you've forgotten what happened to gluttonous Augustus, one of Roald Dahl's most memorable, most selfish characters, he fell into a river of chocolate when he got greedy. And boy was he greedy.

Roald Dahl had a vicious, moralistic streak. When he toppled Gloop into the, well, gloop, he was punishing the boy, "a doughball of a body", and also his mother, a woman who refused to accept the reality of the greed of her child.

Last week there was a lot of hurrumphing about the levels of sugar in some coffee drinks on sale in high street coffee shops. One of them, a hot mulled fruit Venti – grape with chai, orange and cinnamon, since you ask – from Starbucks contained 25 spoonfuls of sugar. Twenty-five spoonfuls!

Other drinks, from other retailers, with a selection of cream toppings and syrupy ingredients, also had a huge amount of sugar in them. A cry of surprise and fury rose. How could those terrible people put such sweet confections together?! The swine! They're ruining the nation's health!

That is an Augustus Gloop mother reaction. It's the wrong way round.

What we put in our bodies is a topic of ongoing and growing interest. We cover it this week. But the sugar in sweet coffee-style drinks has as much to do with us as the people peddling them.

We have both choice AND a responsibility. What days are these to be alive! If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck then chances are it's a ridiculously over-sweetened, over-priced high street coffee conflation that will contain more sugar than is ever good for us.

To dust down a worn remark used frequently during the Scottish referendum period, we can't have it both ways.

We can't complain that the beloved NHS is being eviscerated by an ideologically driven, uncaring government, while at the same time mainlining enough bad food and sugar to destroy our livers and race unblinkered towards diabetes, heart problems, mobility issues and a gamut of other manifestly preventable conditions, thereby crippling the NHS.

Yes, the government has some responsibility – and that goes for those in Westminster, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

Yes, they should carry on pushing for better labelling of food so we can see what makes up the stuff under the nice wrapping. And yes, more than that, they need to help build change that means society doesn't reach for ready meals – either because of cost or convenience – as the first thought.

But we need to accept our own part in this. Retailers have yet to resort to frogmarching us to their shops and force-feeding us through giant chocolate straws.

Actually, scratch that thought. That could catch on...

If we start saying no then they will feel the force and find another thing to sell. We hold the whip hand, if we could only put down the massive coffee cups.

Paul McNamee is editor of The Big Issue
paulmcnamee@bigissue.com
@pauldmcnamee

Illustration: Lauren Crow

FROM THE VAULT... *FEBRUARY 2002* *NO. 477*

Gwyneth Paltrow tells us all about dealing with the pressures of the fame game. She reveals her 6am starts for yoga classes, and giving up meat, sugar and wheat. "I don't do it to stay thin – I do it to stay spiritually healthy."

BIG ISSUE NEWS

HANG OUT WIT
(AND THE

The A-lister wants to sp
at the UK premiere of his

Want to hang out with a Hollywood legend? Who doesn't?! What about one with a social conscience who is putting in the hard yards to raise awareness of homelessness? Could this get any better? What if we told you it was free?

This is your chance to spend a night with Richard Gere at the UK premiere of his new acclaimed film *Time Out of Mind*, and give him a grilling at a Q&A afterwards.

During filming in New York in his role as George, a man whose life hits rock bottom, Gere discovered how completely invisible people become when they're homeless – even when you have one of the most famous faces in the world. "Because I was this character, people decided within two blocks of seeing me that I was homeless. No one made any eye contact. It was confusing and profound. It radically changed my view of myself and of the social fabric around me," he said of the experience.

Time Out of Mind's UK premiere is at

THE WORLD CUP'S COMING HOME!

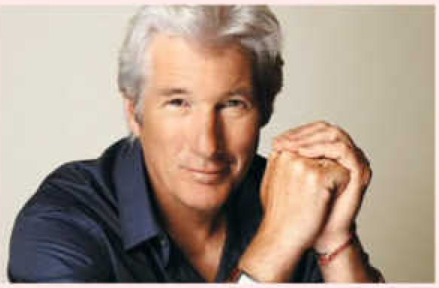
Glasgow will host the 2016 Homeless World Cup, with 64 teams from 51 countries competing in fast-paced fixtures in front of an expected 100,000 spectators in the city's George Square.

This is the second time the tournament has been held in Scotland. It kicks off on July 10, running for a week. At last year's tournament in Amsterdam Mexico triumphed in both the Men's and Women's World Cup, so it's all to play for.

More at homelessworldcup.org

H RICHARD GERE BIG ISSUE)

end an evening with YOU
new film *Time Out of Mind*



To win, tweet @BigIssue with a picture of yourself holding this magazine and the hashtag #GreatGere

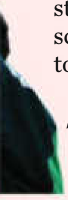
Glasgow Film Festival on February 28 and The Big Issue is media partner for the screening, with editor Paul McNamee hosting the Q&A with Gere afterwards.

We have four pairs of tickets for the screening and Q&A to be won. To enter tweet us @BigIssue with a pic of yourself holding up this issue of the magazine with the hashtag #GreatGere. The winner will be picked on Friday February 26.
See bigissue.com for more details

BIRD'S MAIDEN SPEECH

His journey from homelessness and reform school to the Lords is incredible, and Big Issue founder John Bird delivers his maiden speech in the upper house on February 26.

When he was appointed to the Lords in October, John said: "I believe that one of the complexities of modern policy is that sometimes the best thinkers, like The Big Issue, are left outside the box. Yet if we are to have social opportunity and social justice for all, the thinking within the box needs to change." And he's just getting started. We've had a preview of the speech, scheduled for 10am, and you won't want to miss it.



He will then be on *The Jeremy Vine Show* on Radio 2 from noon explaining *What Makes Us Human* in the regular slot of the same name.

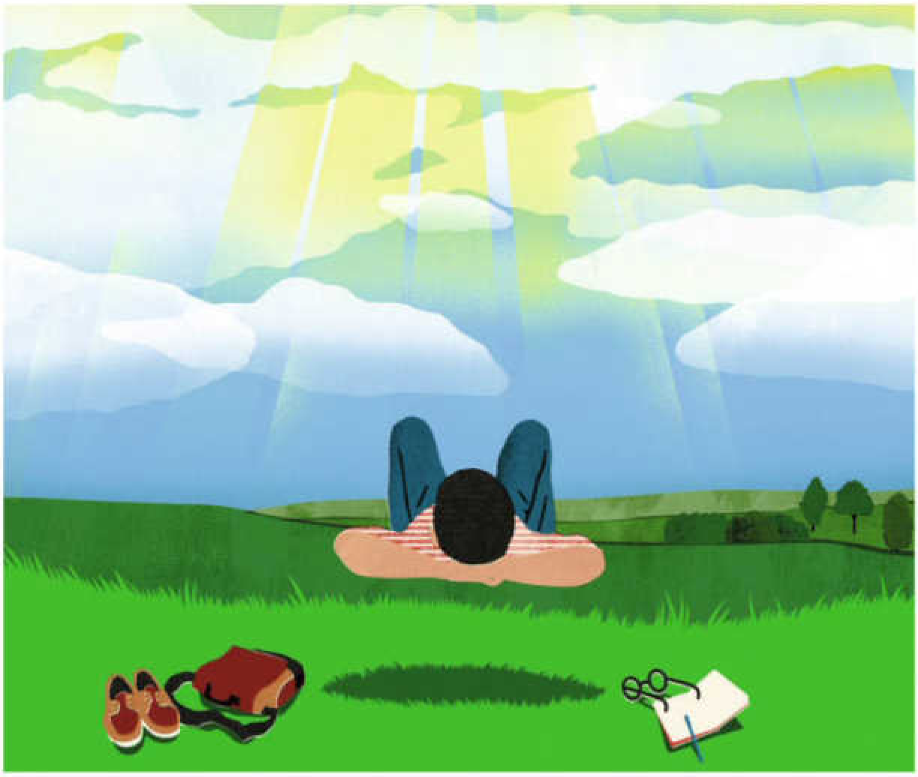


Illustration: Mitch Blunt

ANN WROE

How to feel the grass beneath you

Falling down in fields is something the young, whether children or animals, do quite instinctively. There's intoxication, especially in early summer, in that lush softness and the smell of growth, or in the way a great hill of smooth turf curves upwards into the blue. As grown-ups – unless we are lovers seized by sudden passion – we sit more sedately, put down rugs and wonder vaguely about the mechanics of getting up again. We shouldn't, because there's no better way, casting our weight heedlessly on the weight of the earth, to become boundless, and commune with light.

JMW Turner, Britain's greatest light-painter, spent hours as a boy lying on his back on Hampstead Heath. (It would have been alive with skylarks then; only one was found, the last time anyone counted.) He was watching, and committing to memory, every change of colour in clouds and sky, before racing back to his dingy home in Covent Garden. Looking upwards seems natural, but not always. The Victorian painter Samuel Palmer, too short-sighted to see anything above him, preferred to lie on his stomach. From that vantage point he could suddenly appreciate the beauty of grass: the staining of yellow, white, blue and grey, as well as green, in each individual blade, and the way the sun shone through, as well as on them, covering the field with the glimmering of thousands of points of light.

There's no more passionate lier-down-in-grass, though, than the nature writer Richard Jefferies, who in the late 19th century strode over the Southern Downs deliberately in order to embrace them. Stretched out on his side, lanky in his rough-spun clothes, he would scratch up tiny grains of sand and chalk from the grass-roots in which, like Blake, he saw whole histories and universes. He would pick up tiny snail shells, calling them "receptacles of ancient sunlight". Turning over to feel the present sun on his face, he would wish that he could be a grass blade himself, living unselfconsciously, gradually filling with light and higher life, until all his human limitations fell away.

Jefferies may have been an extreme case but this heady, vertiginous journey from the tiniest sand grain to infinite space is one that we can all attempt. Just banish distractions, put away the phone, lie down in the grass, look at the clouds, listen to the wind – and see what happens.

Ann Wroe is an obituaries writer for *The Economist*. Her new book *Six Facets of Light* is out April 7 (Jonathan Cape, £25)

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HIDDEN BRITAIN

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WALKINGWORLD.COM

No.63

The Devil's Dyke

NEWMARKET, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Devil's Dyke, or Ditch, runs for seven miles from the fen edge at Reach to the claylands at Woodditton. The defensive linear earthwork may have been constructed by Penda, the Saxon king of the East Angles, to protect his tribe from the Britons to the west. Stretching across the open chalk plain between impassable fenland to the north and thickly wooded land to the south, it would have formed an effective barrier.

During the Middle Ages it was regularly known as St Edmund's Dyke because it marked the limit of the jurisdiction of the abbots of Bury St Edmunds.

Devil's Dyke is a post-medieval name, ascribing a supernatural provenance to a monument whose original purpose was lost in the past.

According to one local legend, a king called Hrothgar built the dyke with some local giants to ward off a fire demon who had taken a fancy to his daughter, Hayenna. In the early stages of the conflict the demon looked to have gained the upper hand and the giants fled. But Hrothgar scratched a breach from a nearby river, allowing a thundering cascade of water to flow into the ditch, extinguishing the fire demon and freeing his daughter.

OS Grid Reference: TL 568660

Get instructions and OS map for this walk (ID 3064) for free until March 6 at walkingworld.com. Use discount code HB5 to access more than 6,000 routes for just £15.

Share your photos of this Hidden Britain and ideas for others @bigissue; editorial@bigissue.com

FORWARD THINKING... *Smash-proof helmets.* With the Six Nations in full swing, the long-term impact of head injuries in contact sport is in the news again. Could a helmet being developed for American footballers be the solution? One in three NFL players suffers brain trauma, so designers are working on the Zero1 helmet, which crumples like a bumper on the outside. The helmet diffuses impact, and both linear and rotational forces from hefty tackles, and has advanced skull cushioning.

THE RANT

LISTEN TO OUR DEMAND FOR SUBTITLES

LAST YEAR 'BINGE-WATCH' WAS WORD OF THE YEAR BUT MILLIONS ARE SHUT OUT, SAYS PAUL BRECKELL

When will on-demand providers catch up on the need for subtitles? We've all had days when we couldn't wait to sit on the couch with the remote and a cuppa, so we could catch up on several episodes of our favourite TV show in one go.

Especially now, when the weather is too chilly to stay out long and the days are too short for a post-work pub crawl, there's nothing better than an occasional binge-watch. But 7.5 million Brits are excluded from such indulgences. They rely on subtitles to watch TV but many providers don't offer that option for their on-demand services.

The BBC led the way as the first broadcaster to subtitle 100 per cent of their main channel content. Channel 4 has since followed suit and ITV are nearly there. However, 93 per cent of our on-demand broadcasters don't provide subtitles on mobile and tablet apps. Even Sky only offers subtitles on four per cent of its on-demand services.

MADAM HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SIT BEHIND THE HAT YOU ARE WEARING.

There's a clear business case for service providers to make their content accessible to all. Eleven million people in the UK live with hearing loss – it's about time we end their digital exclusion.

Paul Breckell is CEO of Action on Hearing Loss. Find out more at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/subtitleit

● **Tell us about a campaign or issue you care about and the change you want. @bigissue; editorial@bigissue.com**

“I took a week off to go on tour with The Rolling Stones”

Sue Johnston

Acting royalty, rebel

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

We were the first people to become teenagers. The name wasn't in the English language before then. It was a period of change, and I could feel that myself because I had gone to a grammar school, which nobody in my family had done. I realised my options were far more open than my mother's. I turned 16 in December 1959. It was such an exciting time. We didn't realise we were at the centre of this revolution. Everyone got a conscience, we marched against the Vietnam War, the change was phenomenal: socially, politically, musically.

When I said I wanted to be an actress, the careers officer nearly fell off her stool. Choices were still limited for women. Our generation was told we could be nurses, teachers or secretaries but change was coming. Women were thinking about being educated. It was all bubbling under the surface.

At 16 Elvis was our big hero. I bunked off school to go to a matinee of *GI Blues*. The more our parents thought he was disgraceful, the more we loved him. Elvis, Eddie Cochran and the guys out of America seemed much more exciting than home-grown ones like Cliff Richard.

I would tell my younger self that you don't need a ring on your finger. I was part of a generation of women that thought you needed to be married. It was the first thing your aunty or cousins would ask: have you got a boyfriend? Is it serious? If you weren't conforming, it was odd. I rushed into relationships just so I belonged to somebody. That was a pattern I repeated. But it is a lovely feeling to know you are totally okay on your own. I have no regrets. I didn't meet someone I wanted to spend the rest of my life with.

When I was 17 I left school because I wanted to act. I worked as a tax inspector, which pleased my parents. The office in Liverpool was on the corner of Mathew Street, where the Cavern Club was. The girls in the office invited me along at lunch. It was about being in the right place at the right time. I fell in love with the music. When I first went, the Cavern was more of a jazz club. At a guest night I first saw The Beatles with Pete Best on drums. Oh, I loved them. I went to work for Brian Epstein and got immersed in it. I put acting to one side and was practically living in the Cavern. These were brilliant times. I took a week off work to go on tour with The Rolling Stones. I was going out with the drummer from the Swinging Blue Jeans, who were touring with the Stones. That was quite a week! When you are younger you live for the moment. I wasn't thinking of the future. My mum and dad were cross with me. I suppose I was quite a rebel.

I did things that make me look back and think I had courage. I got myself to drama school in London, which I'd wanted since playing the witch in *The Tinderbox* aged 15. I remember it precisely, sitting on the stage and realising I felt like me there. I belonged. My English teacher encouraged me to take it further, whereas my dad was saying I should go to university because he never had the chance.

Photo: Getty

As a child with her mother, Margaret; *Brookside* cast in 1982 (L-R): Simon O'Brien, Paul Usher, Shelagh O'Hara, Sue Johnston and Ricky Tomlinson; *The Royle Family*

I wish I hadn't been so conscious I was working class. At drama school there were a lot of posh people, and I was so embarrassed about my Liverpool accent. I was friends with a girl from Birkenhead and a boy from Birmingham, and the three of us clung together because we were, I suppose, ashamed of our working-class roots. I am not now. I am very proud. And I'm proud of my parents. I have their work ethic.

My mother found my being educated difficult. I think a lot of women did. She told me, later in life, that she felt she had lost me. Suddenly you had these girls being educated free-thinkers, going off to live in London and leaving them behind. It must have been very hard. They never had the opportunities. She used to say: "I wish you'd married a local lad and lived around the corner." You feel a bit selfish but it is your life and you have to follow your dream.

George Osborne is my MP. He should be ashamed there is such poverty in his constituency. Wilmslow is supposed to be posh Manchester – and there is a foodbank, which helps lots of people. It shows how bad it is if it is happening here. But Osborne is not even looking. I have never known such a gap between wealth and poverty. The austerity cuts are tragic. People are suffering beyond belief and this government is getting away with it.

I still get up and shout when I feel something needs to be done. I was so behind the Liverpool supporters about the ticket prices. They behaved with terrific dignity and won their case. At the minute I'm supporting the junior doctors all the way in their fight. I never grow tired of that first rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone at Anfield. It gives me shivers. To be part of the crowd is a wonderful feeling. It is very empowering. I shout and swear but that sort of language stays in the stadium. And now, when it is boring, I can watch Mr Klopp on the touchline because he is so extraordinary. I moved to London for a while but came back. My football team needs me at the moment!

I would have been very excited as a 16-year-old to think this is the life I was going to have. My career would have blown my mind. It still does. My younger self wanted to be an actor and I have become one. I would think, gosh, is that really going to happen to me? I have been lucky to be at the beginning of things. Not just The Beatles but *Brookside*. My 16-year-old self would have loved that role. We filmed it just near where I went to school. And I was proud of us all in *The Royle Family*. To be there at the start, creating a new thing, has been a real joy.

I have wonderful childhood memories. I know I was totally loved. Although it was hard, we always had books. My dad loved Shakespeare and could quote anything. He had such love of language. They made me care about things, gave me good manners and gave me love. I was a very lucky girl. Although, as a rebellious teenager, you don't feel that when your dad has locked you out because you missed the last bus home.

Love in Recovery starts March 15 at 11pm on BBC Radio 4.
Interview: Adrian Lobb @adey70

IN 1959, THE YEAR SUE JOHNSTON TURNS 16… Fidel Castro comes to power as Cuba's prime minister / Barbie Dolls hit the shelves / The first Mini goes on sale in Britain

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FRIDAY 11TH MARCH 2016

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JOHN BIRD

We're consumed with consuming

A wash of blue swept over me. I had got up and gone to town to sit in some coffee shop and write, perhaps look in at a bookshop. It's raining and it's deadly grey and it seems there are a lot of people like me caught in the heavy rain without an aquascutum – which as you may know is Latin for umbrella; or was back when I was told it by an 18-year-old, when I was an 18-year-old.

More to get out of the rain I go into the bookshop and look at all the books that are arrayed over tables, each with an appealing message to buy them. What colour shall I pick? What subject? History? Nature? Erotica? Personal improvement? A vast pile has smiling people, who look as if whatever happiness, eternal and certain, is, they have got it.

I look closer and I note that every last one of them is a cookbook. All the smiles have replaced earlier smiles. Previous smiles were because some gameshow host had a really great life and had written a book about it. Now it's what you can do with a baking pan and a wok.

And then, a sanctified table, like the others draped in green satin, but this one boldly states 'Inequality'. A big pile of books that deal with the gap between rich and poor. I pick up a yellow book that tells me the history of inequality, going back 100,000 years to our juvenile years as a species when we just got out of Africa.

I might be wrong here. I might be 100 or 200 thousand years out. But as a former printer of books I look at the paper and the binding, and who printed it and where.

It has its appeals. I have been known to buy books because of the quality of paper, the binding and the print.

But this is a deadly serious subject. That morning, contributing to my blueness I think, a very educated man was telling me that we have to hit the rich to pay for the poor. And all manner of stuff that seems to pour out of the minds of all; educated or otherwise. He did not vary an iota from what is a cacophony that surrounds me.

He would have loved this arrangement of perhaps 20 or 30 books that told him about poverty and its incredible increase and the gap that grows between it and wealth.

Spoiled for choice: Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*

My blueness deepens in the shop of 100,000 temptations.

Why? Because everyone seems to be saying the same thing. Yet to me the gap is a symptom, not a cause. It is what happens when every last human being, by the standards of earlier times, is on the permanent hunt to buy something.

The big billionaires' wealth has only happened because of the monumental and mountainous amount of products and services the billions who buy in the world bought.

"The gap between rich and poor is what happens when every last human is on the hunt to buy something"

Take consumerism out of the world, and you have Woolworths and British Home Stores, and those catalogues that were as thick as a brick to choose your delivered-by-post underwear. And 13 cheeses to choose from, not a hundred, at Sainsbury's.

And you've got an unbroken Soviet Union, and not football team-owning oligarchs who made their money out of the sale of state-owned oil and gas installations.

And thousands of branches of coffee shops and all the other paraphernalia of the obese marketplace.

And no enormous hospitals struggling to keep up with all the illnesses we give ourselves because of the new shite we feed ourselves from the ever-expanding consumeristic marketplace.

On the 'Inequality' table they sell you 20 to 30 book products that would not exist if we were not involved in a meltdown of civilisation in which billionaires feed us the kind of stuff we consume so that they can stay billionaires.

Blue now to the eyeballs, I leave the self-deceiving shop that tries to sell more distractions and walk out into the rain. And bump into a distracted Big Issue vendor on the way somewhere to meet a friend. He is chirpy and says, how did I end up with my hair grown like a Mark Twain on a bad hair day? I tell him that I have to cut it off. I've been doing a TV programme and most of it was filmed when my head was shorn. For continuity, I have to wear the same clothes from a few months back. And have the hair shorn.

He puts his finger on one reason why I look obviously blue. "Try a real problem for once," he says and gallops off for his meet.

John Bird is the founder and Editor in Chief of The Big Issue. @johnbirdswords
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Illustration: Lauren Crow

WALK IN HER SHOES

MARCH 2016

Girls like Zema walk for miles every day to fetch water.

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SAMIRA AHMED

Step into Narnia, where movie magic quietly rests

The chill hits me and a slight tang of… meat. I've entered the fur store room at Angels Costumes. We stand in silence. There are racks of fur coats – like a multiverse of Narnia entry points. Fox stoles are piled high to the ceiling. Tim Angel, the seventh-generation boss of a family firm, is giving me a guided tour. "A lot of actors refuse to wear fur, of course," he says, "but we feel we have to keep them." And there is the dilemma and fascination for Angels – a family firm since the 1800s, which just won a special Bafta for outstanding British contribution to cinema. There is a sense of keeping an essential archive of lived history and documenting changing social taste. But they're also in the 'what if?' business and so almost nothing is thrown away.

Bafta marked Tim Angel's Outstanding Contribution with a special gong

Photo: Getty

Angels' giant warehouse in north London is a library of culture like nothing I've ever seen. Think of the final scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* but with every treasure not boxed but on open racks and rails, so your eyes are bombarded with imagery. Exotic ethnic costumes from Bond films – African fabrics, Japanese samurai armour. History and fantasy before your eyes, racked up to infinity points in every direction.

On the upper floor uniforms and helmets dominate. I glimpse an infinity of headless Michael Caines – thousands of 'em in the distinctive red jackets that evoke *Zulu*. Alec Guinness' Obi Wan Kenobi costume once got lost in the 'brown monks' section of 'religious' and had been hired out of the fancy dress business that still operates from the big store on Shaftesbury Avenue in London's West End. They are more careful now.

The fancy dress business is still going strong. Tim shows me the streamlined system packaging up and posting out online orders, and not just for Hallowe'en.

"Young women aged 18 to 30 love dressing up and they buy costumes for their boyfriends," he explains. "And they want to look sexy." Hence the infinite variety of sexy witches and flapper girls. There's a whole sociology thesis there.

Back in the screen-hire side the uniforms continue. At first I mistake racks of maroon and green for military dress but Tim points out they are the smart liveries of cinema doormen and cigarette girls: "When cinemas started they needed to build a sense that they were respectable places of entertainment."

Angels bought up many of these in bulk lots as the film palaces died away in the 1960s. Here they survive; social history waiting to be brought back to life. It is remarkably poignant.

When Tim went on a prospective buying visit to the old UFA studios in Potsdam after the Wall came down he was horrified to be shown a room full of real concentration camp uniforms and immaculate 1930s children's clothes, each piece stamped with a swastika. All those decades the East German film industry had just kept them without a thought.

> **"Think of the final scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* but with every treasure on open racks and rails"**

I stop Tim by the LE racks – Light Entertainment – a whole costume department the BBC controversially sold off in the 1990s. I am glad to find it's safe at Angels. "We don't really know if this will ever be wanted again," observes Tim, "but I feel it's important to keep it."

There are strange pantomime costumes worn on shows like *The Generation Game*, *The Kenny Everett Video Show* and *Russ Abbot Show*. I even spy an *It's a Knockout* 'giant' costume on a back shelf like a felled Titan. Tim and I muse on how space fantasy has changed. Angels outfitted Tom Baker's *Doctor Who*. Tim costumed *Blake's 7*, remarking on how science fiction in the 1970s and '80s tried to be bold and exotic, where now it tries to look gritty and realistic.

Everywhere I spot special trolley rails with special orange labels where costume designers are pulling together looks, as if in a supermarket, for major film productions.

Finally there is a room marked 'principals' – a kind of sanctum for special pieces. A plum velvet Victorian smoking jacket catches my eye amidst hundreds of suits. I have a gut feeling… It is. It's Peter Cushing's from a Hammer horror. I smile, and I put it back. Tim has to get back to work too, with a rack of 'to sort' items waiting for him to decide their fate: Peter O'Toole's green waistcoat from *Bright Young Things*, stained Bullingdon Club coats from *The Riot Club*. I step out into suburban London, knowing that within these vaults a treasure of culture is quietly, silently resting.

Samira Ahmed is a columnist for The Big Issue. She is a journalist and broadcaster. @SamiraAhmedUK

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DISTANCE

BY ABDI

Abdi moved to the UK to escape the war in Somalia. He has lived in Swansea, Gloucestershire and London. Sometimes he is housed, sometimes he is homeless. Sometimes he works in factories or in various temporary roles via agencies, and sometimes he is unemployed. He enjoys drawing portraits and capturing interactions between people.

RACHAEL (A STORY)

BY MELANIE EDWARDS

I first met Rachael in the soup run.
She had on a big oversized red coat hiding
her tiny frame and her head was shrouded
in a white scarf, two huge inquisitive eyes
peeked out.

I was playing my guitar on the beach and
Rachael sat beside me, drinking her coffee,
just smiling away.

For two months we were firm friends.
I'd busk and sell magazines and in the
evenings we would pool our money and
have a feast.

No longer reliant on the dangerous
soup runs.

We would listen to the music of the sea and
look up to the stars.

Melanie, 44, originally from Wales, lives in Michael House hostel, Boscombe. "The poems I write are drawn from my life experiences or from my view of the world."

▲

UNTITLED

BY NUR ABDULLAH

"I was working abroad with my children," says Nur, who submitted her artwork through a workshop at London homeless charity SHP. "My job was cut and I was sent back to the UK and separated from my children. After four years of trying to get back to them, I have got a flat of my own. I have started painting again at SHP's super Wednesday group."

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'I FEEL LIKE I'M IN THE MIDST OF A MODERN HIGHLAND CLEARANCE'

This is what the world looks like when eviction comes knocking. Former broadcaster Jenny McBain felt the walls close in as the roof was taken away

As the years roll by a house becomes more than four walls and a roof; it is a stage set for life happenings and an archive of times past. The flat we lived in for 15 years belonged to a large, privately owned estate but the time we spent in it and the care we invested in it made it feel like home.

We hosted interesting guests at our kitchen table. Actor and aid worker David Hayman stopped by for chicken curry, we dined with a Palestinian poet and served a cup of tea to the Scottish Greens' co-convenor.

We loved the panoramic view from the south-facing windows that led the eye along a Highland sea loch to faraway mountains. Scribbled pencil marks on the wall sketched the growth of my three children.

But our memories and our attachment to our home counted for nothing when we were given notice to leave just over a year ago. Since the eviction letter landed on the doormat we have had a tumultuous introduction to how it feels when you do not have a place to call your own.

> I DECORATED AND LAID NEW CARPETS, THEN THE LANDLORD DROPPED A BOMBSHELL. WE HAD TWO MONTHS TO LEAVE

It has been a tough time, coming to grips with loss and insecurity. The two older children have left home and created successful lives for themselves, one in Glasgow, the other in Norway. I am now a single parent with one dependent child. When homelessness happens it strikes a brutal blow and does not take account of other stresses people may be coping with at the time. I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, which makes me especially vulnerable to stress.

Despite my mental health disability, I have had an interesting life. I ran a children's theatre company in Glasgow, became one of Scottish Television's first onscreen announcers, then a newsreader on BBC Scotland. I moved to Italy then to the Highlands, where I became a radio journalist and writer. I've had long spells of being unable to work at all.

Then came that moment when I felt like I was in the news rather than reporting it. I have been swept up in a new wave of land clearances.

The details as to what happened when landowners in the 18th century decreed that sheep should be given precedence over people are hotly contested. Historical records show some tenants were given financial incentives to leave and forge brave futures in the New World.

However, the forlorn sight of tumbledown stone townships, abandoned to the elements, tells its own story and there is compelling evidence that substantial numbers of people were evicted forcibly, without compensation. It could be said that history is repeating itself. Right now many property owners favour short-term holiday lets over long-term commitment.

Throughout Scotland, major landowners and buy-to-let landlords are taking pre-emptive steps to deal with forthcoming changes in legislation. When it comes into force later this year, the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill will offer tenants protection against unfair eviction and big rent increases. Meanwhile, it is scandalously simple to make people homeless. A signed-for letter, with a couple of pages of legalese, is all it takes.

Photo: Margaret Soraya

We soon realised we were not alone. This clearing of people from the land and from their homes is a 21st-century version of what happened to our forebears.

The estate on which we were tenants took steps to terminate all its long lets. One man was an employee for 10 years before becoming incapacitated by Lyme disease. Neither his loyal service nor health problems were taken into account. In Sutherland, friends with a business, lots of livestock and several employees were told they would have to find a new home from which to run their tourism enterprise.

For the most part we tenants became silent casualties of the law of unintended consequences, whereby legislation designed to enhance peoples' rights is having a short-term deleterious effect.

Scottish landowners have other legislative changes to take into account. The Land Reform Bill, also due to enter the statute books this year, is aimed at widening ownership of land. Some might say such changes are overdue; around half of all privately owned land in Scotland is controlled by 432 people. For those used to exercising power over thousands of acres, the forthcoming changes represent a new, challenging chapter in their lives of privilege.

Since 1994 vast tracts of privately owned land have been tax-exempt. The bill will end tax relief for shooting estates, and the money raised through taxation will be funnelled into the Scottish Land Fund to facilitate community land buyouts. Landowners considered to be running their estate in a way which is not in the public interest could be forced to sell up.

For us, the knowledge that we were living through a juncture in history was scant compensation for the travails ahead. I found it difficult to eat or to sleep, there was a danger I would relapse into a manic state. My application to the council was not awarded many points, so there was no chance of making it to the top of the housing list. It looked like we were going to have to brazen things out until two months before we had to leave, at which point the authorities would consider us a priority. Then we got word that there was a cottage for rent about a mile outside the village.

Its owner reassured me this would be a good medium-term solution. He said it was unlikely he and his family would want to repossess the property any time soon. The rent was low because he wanted tenants who would appreciate the place and look after it.

The building was far from perfect but after I redecorated and put down new carpeting it was cosier. My son and I moved in and, much to his delight, adopted the cat that belonged to the previous tenant. For a few months we enjoyed a wonderful respite from the worries of having nowhere to live. Being surrounded by trees with access to a small, secluded beach was delightful.

We had settled in and the paint was barely dry when the new landlord dropped a bombshell: he intended to end our tenancy. He and his family intended to relocate from the south of England to the Highlands.

He gave us only two months to leave the house, and notice was delivered just before Christmas, when council offices, legal firms and the Citizens' Advice Bureaux were shutting down for the holidays. However, I had a lot of experience of firefighting eviction by now.

I have been garnering letters of support from medical professionals, my MSP and my son's guidance teacher. None were in any doubt that security of tenure was essential for our well-being.

Our story has a happy ending. Early in the new year we were offered a housing association property in our village. The immediate future is not so bright for Scotland's estimated 700,000 private tenants. Some – and there is no record how many – will be living through a nightmare scenario brought about by the march of political progress. TBI

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The horsemeat scandal made many of us wonder what we were actually eating – and led biologist **Nicola Temple** on an 18-month odyssey to ask if we really are what we eat, how much trouble are we in? →

www.freshandnaked.co.uk

I've been trying to make a fake egg for two weeks. My kitchen counter, now a makeshift laboratory, is covered in various white powders – all perfectly legitimate chemicals used by the food industry, I assure you. Kitchen scales, bowls, mixers and an egg poacher are my tools – nothing out of the ordinary here. I have mastered the yolk and egg white and I can even get it into an approximate egg-shape but a perfectly crackable shell still eludes me.

Why am I making fake eggs, you ask? I am trying to replicate a form of food fraud that has cropped up in China since the mid-1990s. I was hoping to use it as a demonstration of what is possible in the world of food fraud because, without a doubt, this is one of the most extreme examples my co-author Richard Evershed and I came across in our research. After all, why go to the trouble of making something that evolution has perfectly equipped chickens to do? Simple. Money.

An egg takes 25 hours to form and pass through a hen. Within that same time frame a skilled person using easily acquired and relatively cheap ingredients and equipment can produce hundreds of eggs. The fakes are placed into egg cartons and sold at market to unsuspecting consumers, and the profits are double to quadruple those of traditional chicken farmers. The fraudsters move on to the next town before anyone is any the wiser.

Biologist Nicola Temple says it's impossible to test absolutely all the food we eat for fakery

Don't panic, the full English isn't threatened – well, not by fake eggs anyway. Here in the UK it is more likely to be some undeclared meat or fillers in the sausages or some myrtle leaves in the oregano used to season the not-so organic tomatoes. And it's not just on the plate. Fruit juice, coffee and tea all find themselves among the leading categories of reported cases of food fraud. So while we're not likely to see some of the extreme examples of food fraud that have cropped up elsewhere in the world, we are not immune.

But don't take my word for it. Professor Chris Elliott, Pro Vice Chancellor at Queen's University Belfast, who led the independent review of UK food supply networks following Horsegate, says: "While there's no doubt that trivial acts of fraud are happening all too frequently, and they shouldn't, food fraud, or food crime as I prefer to call it, is really much more complex, sinister and organised, and it has the potential to ruin businesses and the lives of those affected."

Food crime is not a new phenomenon. No doubt the minute our farming ancestors started to produce surplus food that could be traded, the more unscrupulous characters among them found ways to cheat. Romans masked soured wine with lead, and bakers in the 18th century added alum to bread to make it appear as though more expensive bleached flour had been used. However, unlike the grub of days gone by, much of our food is highly processed – ingredients are sourced from suppliers all around the world, mixed together, packaged and shipped around the globe at astonishing rates and through many hands.

Each of these points in the supply network are an opportunity for fraud, and opportunity sits on one side of the scale used to weigh every decision to commit food crime. Opportunity and reward (money) need to be high while risk and effort need to be low. And there is usually a trigger – being undercut by competitors or crop failure – which pushes a person (or people) to partake in criminal activity.

"We speak a lot about triggers," says Dr Amy Kircher, director of the Food Protection and Defense Institute, a Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence in the US. "And this can be climate change or even newly touted health benefits of a particular product."

Kircher makes her point using pomegranate as an example. "When the health benefits of pomegranate were being heavily advertised, we saw a dramatic increase in the number of pomegranate products out there. But the US was still producing the same number of pomegranates. Production hadn't increased. How is the gap being filled?"

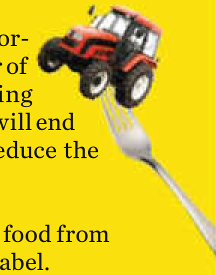
One of the ways to tip the scales on fraudsters is to increase the risk. In 1995, the government pulled maize oil off supermarket shelves and found that 35 per cent of the 79 samples tested had been adulterated with undeclared oil but they couldn't say how much. Richard Evershed, Professor of ›

REDUCE YOUR VULNERABILITY TO FOOD FRAUD

1. Buy food that is recognisable.
For example, buy fish with recognisable features – head, skin, tail – that assure you it is the species the label says it is rather than non-descript white fillets. Buy whole cuts of meat rather than minced products. Grind whole spices at home.

2. Where possible make your food from whole ingredients.
I appreciate that this isn't always easy but it is without the doubt the easiest way to know what's in your food.

3. Reduce the number of stops between the farm and your fork.
If every stop in the food supply is an opportunity for fraud, then reducing the number of stops reduces your vulnerability to being scammed. A side benefit to this is that you will end up supporting more local business and reduce the number of miles your food has travelled.



4. Buy from people you trust.
You will likely learn a lot more about your food from the person selling it to you than from the label.

5. You get what you pay for.
In August of last year, Trading Standards officers seized 130,000 litres of counterfeit vodka from a single illegal factory in Wigan – worth about £1.7m in unpaid duty. The bogus booze contains anything from chloroform to isopropyl alcohol (a component of antifreeze) and sells for as little as £2 a bottle. Drinking the stuff can lead to dizziness, black-out, vomiting, blindness and possibly death – not really a good deal after all.

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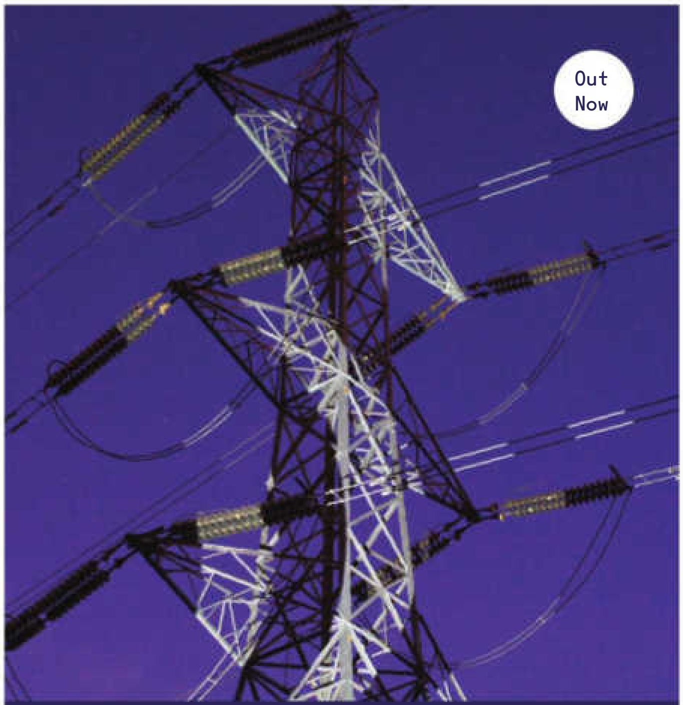

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Biogeochemistry at the University of Bristol (when he's not writing books with me), was called in to develop more sensitive methods for detecting and quantifying the adulteration of maize oil. It's very difficult to tell when a cheaper oil has been mixed into a more expensive one, firstly because they mix together so well and secondly because the fatty acids of the different oil types (sunflower, rapeseed, olive, maize etc) overlap with one another as there is natural variation. Richard applied methods he was using in the analysis of ancient fat residues preserved on clay pots to the maize oil question and found he could detect as little as five per cent rapeseed oil in maize oil. News of this new testing method got out. When testing was repeated six years later, not a single sample was adulterated. Legislation hadn't changed. Opportunity hadn't changed. But risk of getting caught had increased – the scales had tipped.

Testing increases risk for fraudsters, and there is an arsenal of *CSI*-style analytical methods at our disposal. But think of the number of ingredients in the 40,000 or so products displayed on supermarket shelves and the number of different ways those ingredients are prepared. And then there are all the things that could possibly be added to those ingredients. Who would have thought of testing for the presence of melamine – a chemical used to make countertops – in infant milk? Yet there it was in 2008 poisoning children in China.

Finding rogue elements in complex mixtures of ingredients is not easy work. It requires an in-depth knowledge of the food and how it is prepared. With a question in mind, the right test needs to be applied to identify the tell-tale chemical 'fingerprint' of either the pure food or the suspected adulterant.

Take honey, for example. A pure substance that requires little to no processing on our part and a whole lot of work on the bee's part. The simplest way to assess its purity is to measure its sugar composition. Honey is mostly fructose and glucose, with a little sucrose (less than three per cent). So adding cane or beet sugar (both sucrose) to bulk it out would be easily detected as it would ramp up the sucrose percentage. However, even if testing shows the sugar proportions to be within the natural range of honey, it doesn't mean it hasn't been adulterated with products like high fructose corn syrup. A different test is required to resolve that issue, let alone claims of the type or origin of the honey.

The point is it's complicated and we will never be able to test all food. However, we are not powerless as consumers. There are choices that we can make to reduce our risk of falling victim to food crime. We can also report suspicious activity. "Defeating food crime is about more than testing products," explains Andy Morling, head of the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) at the Food Standards Agency. "Gathering intelligence from people is also vital. The NFCU is very keen to hear in confidence from anyone working in the food industry or elsewhere that may have information on a food crime taking place. Combining the very best testing with the very best criminal intelligence will help us protect UK consumers."

In the meantime, I'm personally going to leave the egg-making to the hens. TBI

Nicola Temple is co-author of *Sorting the Beef from the Bull: The Science of Food Fraud Forensics*, with Richard Evershed, out now in hardback (Bloomsbury, £16.99)

HOW UGLY FRUIT AND VEG CAN SAVE US ALL

WORDS: VICKY CARROLL

If talk of 'fake' food turns your stomach, it's worth remembering there is a lot of good fresh produce in Britain – but so much of what comes out our fields, one-third of what we grow, ends up binned. Some is rejected by supermarkets at the farm gate as 'imperfect' or chucked in the skip when shoppers refuse to buy bruised stuff on the shelves, while the rest goes in our bins at home.

But that is all changing. Asda is leading the way by launching 'wonky veg boxes', a carton costing £3.50 packed with fresh vegetables that might not be as pretty as the veg on the main display but will feed a family of four for a week.

Rolling out across 128 stores in Britain, the boxes contain carrots, onions, peppers, potatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, leeks and a parsnip that are misshaped, have growth cracks or are differently sized. After a trial run last year backed by Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty on their *Friday Night Feast* TV show, Asda found that 65 per cent of customers would buy imperfect-looking fruit and veg if it tasted the same and had the same nutritional content as regularly shaped and unbruised produce, and 75 per cent would be attracted by their reduced price.

"If most Brits had half an idea of the amount going to waste, they'd be snapping up ugly veg by the trolley-load," says Jamie. "There's no difference whatsoever in taste or nutritional value. This is perfectly good food that could and should be eaten by humans."

Ian Harrison, Asda's technical produce director, says: "This range only solves one part of the food-waste puzzle. The work we continue to do with our growers to ensure as much of their crop is sold as possible is the golden ticket for farmers."

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *War on Waste* campaign and TV series is rallying the public to pile pressure on supermarkets to change their policies – and it seems to be working. After sustained lobbying of Morrisons, the supermarket introduced 'wonky' seasonal veg to its regular displays at the end of last year. And last week Sainsbury's and Tesco killed off wasteful and misleading 'buy-one-get-one-free' deals, with other supermarkets set to follow suit.

It's a rolling trend. At the start of 2014 seven big supermarkets – Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, the Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose – decided to reveal how much food they bin each year, and signed a pledge to drive down the amount that ends up in their skips, from six per cent to one per cent by 2020. And as Asda's wonky veg boxes show, it's shoppers' purchase-power that will drive real change in what we eat.

SMILEY'S PEOPLE

You may not know the name but you'll recognise the face. Actor Michael Smiley tells **Adrian Lobb** about the beautiful mistakes that made him so in demand

Michael Smiley arrives to our rendezvous in Brixton on his six-speed fold-up Brompton bike. After a chat about his many two-wheeled friends, he gives an impromptu guided tour, detailing where to find vintage clothes, leather goods, furniture and damn fine coffee from his friend Carol. He has lived here since the last century, and is deeply embedded in the neighbourhood, judging by the number of people who stop to say hello. He is also concerned about where the increasing pace of gentrification will lead.

"Money is moving in. If it is used with empathy for the environment, then everyone is okay. If you walk in with a scorched-earth policy, that is heartbreaking," he says.

Smiley might be an in-demand actor these days but his first forays into showbusiness were as a stand-up. And he still has the flow. He moves smoothly between subjects – from his friend's relief efforts for Syrian refugees, via the NHS, losing his mind, to a song by The Beat during a summer working in a biscuit factory, and his philosophies on religion and politics. "We have natural empathy for each other, that's the raw form of politics. The raw state of religion is wonder," he says.

He talks about looking at the world with love, rather than from a position of fear. "Donald Trump is coming in on a ticket of fear, while over here Jeremy Corbyn is being vilified for daring to play the love card."

Eventually, we arrive at his flourishing acting career. "Tagline: By the way, he is in a series called *The Aliens*." Since his first appearance with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost (more of them later) as a raving bike messenger – not much of a leap, at the time he was an acid house DJ and bicycle courier – in *Spaced*, Smiley has worked steadily. These days, he is an increasingly well-known face, if not, yet, a household name.

Where do we know him from? A regular role in *Luther* as tech-savvy detective Benny Silver; as Sergeant George's loyal ex-Army buddy in the BBC's classic *Bleak House*; film roles in *Perfume*; recent hit *The Lobster*; *Shaun of the Dead*, plus *Ripper Street*, *Black Mirror*, *New Tricks* and recent *Doctor Who* episode, Into the Dalek. Then there are his frequent collaborations with Ben Wheatley since the latter directed him in oddball BBC sketch show *The Wrong Door*, in which Smiley played a Train Pirate alongside Brian Blessed.

Wheatley wrote a role for Smiley in *Down Terrace*, "filmed on a shredded shoestring – 13 scenes, one location, shot in a single day" in 2009. Smiley won Best Supporting Actor at the British Independent Film Awards for their critically acclaimed thriller *Kill List* in 2011, before a commanding central performance in *A Field in England* – a black-and-white psychological drama about the English Civil War that, again, punched way above its budget.

"It was more Ben Wheatley alchemy," he says. "But it is transparent. You can see how it was made online. Here are three chords, go and form a band? Well, here is how we made a low-budget film." Next up is *Free Fire*, set among gangs in Boston in the 1970s and co-starring Cillian Murphy and Brie Larson.

First, though, *The Aliens* lands on E4, a bleak comic drama making strong and none-too-subtle allusions to the culture of fear that has grown around migration.

"It is set at a time when aliens have been living with us but are corralled into a ghetto behind a huge wall," he says. "They come in to do menial tasks in the human world but their world is poverty-stricken, all drugs and prostitution."

This is a busy time. Smiley appears in BBC Two's *Murder* next month, and is in cinemas now in *Orthodox* – a film about a Jewish man (Stephen Graham) shunned by his community for refusing to give up boxing. Smiley climbs back into the boxing ring for *Jawbone*, which is shooting soon and co-stars Ray Winstone, Ian McShane and the film's writer, Johnny Harris.

"Barry McGuigan is training us. There is so much heart and love in this film. If you think you are going to see Rocky 10, you are in for a big surprise. Paul Weller's done the soundtrack."

Smiley didn't always move in such exalted circles. In the 1980s, after leaving his home in Northern Ireland, he was homeless and lived in a series of hostels in west London.

"We were homeless with a young child, living hand to mouth," he says. "It was so tough. But we were blessed that we were in a community of people from all over Britain and the world.

"This was the 1980s, it was a time of squatting, making do. We looked after each other. There were plenty of times I came home on a Friday to my wife and child, in one room of a DHSS hostel with a cooker and cot, with no money. But word would go out. Maybe our friends got their dole money and would make a big stew. If someone had money or beer, they folded us in."

He talks of feeling isolated after being rehoused way across London away from their support network. When his first marriage broke down (they remain close, his ex is godmother to his two children with his wife, writer Miranda Sawyer), he ended up sharing a flat with aspiring comedians Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.

"We lived together for four years. Then we all started going into long-term relationships," he says. "There was something a bit heartbreaking about breaking the gang up."

As Smiley recalls the people who helped him along his journey, he ponders why it took him so long. "I never made a connection between being funny and telling stories, either as a comedian or actor. If you are a working-class lad from a housing estate in Northern Ireland and have ideas above your station, you need a reference point. And I didn't know anyone going to drama school."

But then, he concedes, it is this complex, convoluted journey that ensures Smiley continues to, in his words, look at the world with love, empathy and compassion. As the shops begin to come to life, he surveys the scene.

"Brixton should be a foothold for people who've come from Eritrea, Somalia or Syria," he says. "You might only know one person but if you find a shop where you can get your specialised food from, you now have something to feel part of and a way to find people.

"That is what I did. I'm an immigrant in this country. I have been for 30 years. I'm celebrated now thanks to a series of beautiful mistakes. But if you have been down that path, you don't want to deny other people access. You want to wish them all the luck you had."

Michael Smiley stars in *The Aliens*, starting on E4 in March

Nick Frost, Simon Pegg and Michael Smiley share a flat together (top); the same three during a recent reunion (middle); Smiley in *Kill List* with Neil Maskell

Photo: Neale Haynes / Contour by Getty Images

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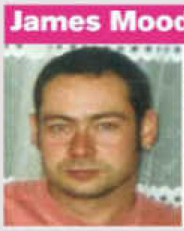
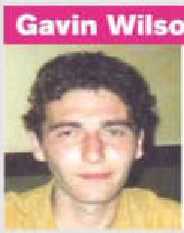
James Moodie - Faversham, Kent



James went missing from Faversham, Kent on 17 May 1998. He was 30 at the time of his disappearance.

James is urged to call Missing People on 116 000 or email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk for advice and support, including the opportunity to send a message home in confidence.

Gavin Wilson - Scarborough, North Yorkshire



Gavin went missing from Scarborough, North Yorkshire on 27 February 2006. He was 28 at the time of his disappearance.

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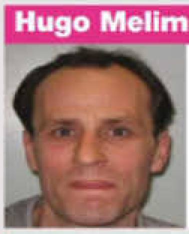
Hugo Melim - North Kensington, London



Hugo went missing from North Kensington, London on 29 December 2015. He was 48 at the time of his disappearance.

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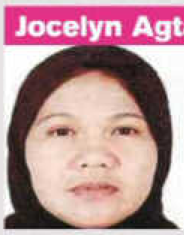
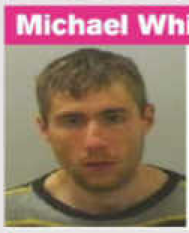
Jocelyn Agtag - Acton, London



Jocelyn went missing from Acton, London on 17 January 2016. She was 39 at the time of her disappearance.

Jocelyn, we are here for you whenever you are ready; we can listen, talk you through what help you need, pass a message for you and help you to be safe.

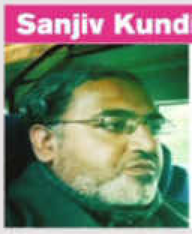
Michael Whinham - Newcastle upon Tyne



Michael went missing from Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear on 14 November 2015. He was 31 at the time of his disappearance.

Michael is urged to call Missing People on 116 000 or email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk for advice and support, including the opportunity to send a message home in confidence.

Sanjiv Kundi - Paris, France



Sanjiv went missing from Paris, France on 25 September 2013. He was 41 at the time of his disappearance.

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Missing People would like to thank *The Big Issue* for publicising vulnerable missing people on this page.

Our free 116 000 number is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

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OUTSIDER ART

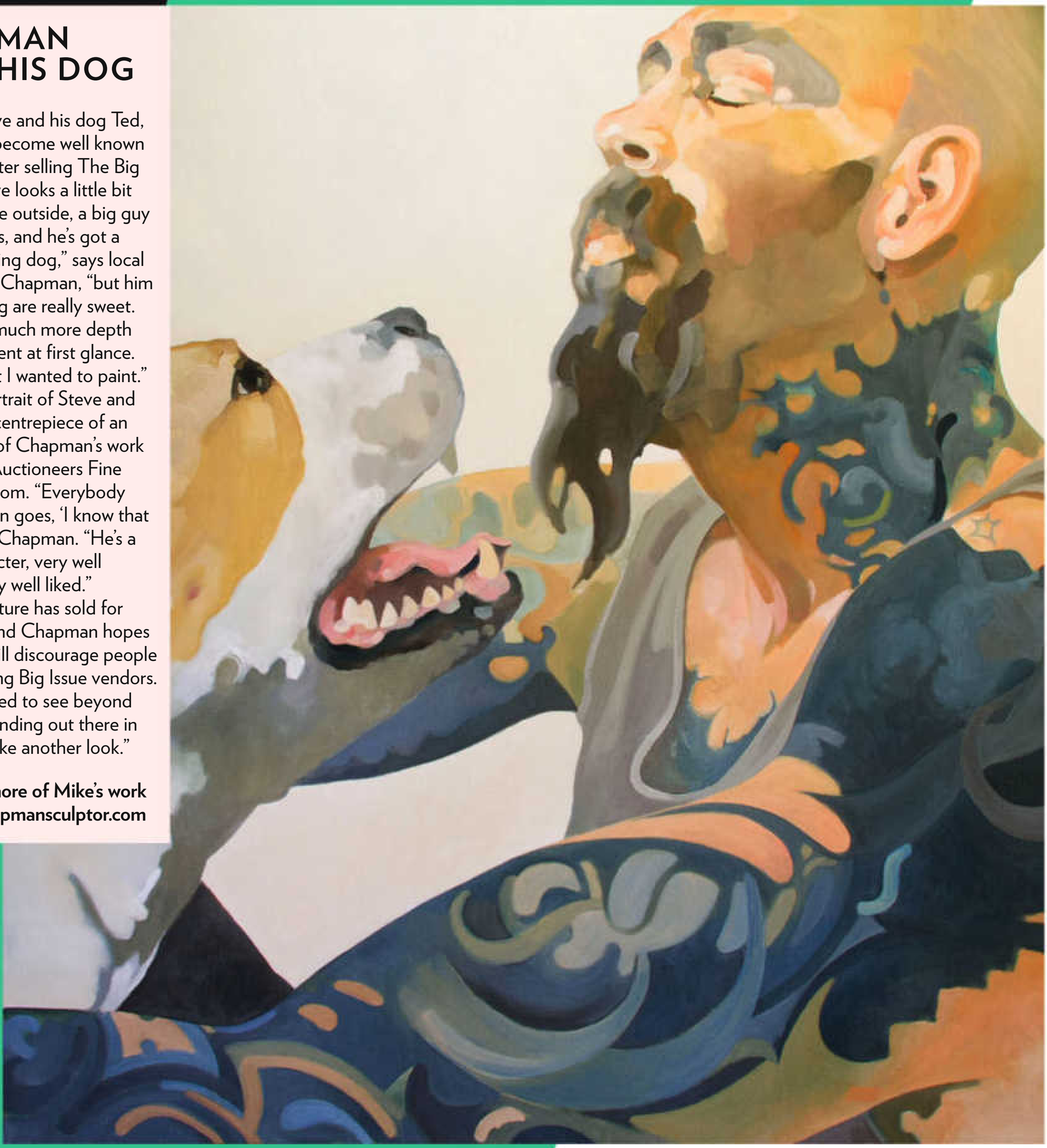
ONE MAN AND HIS DOG

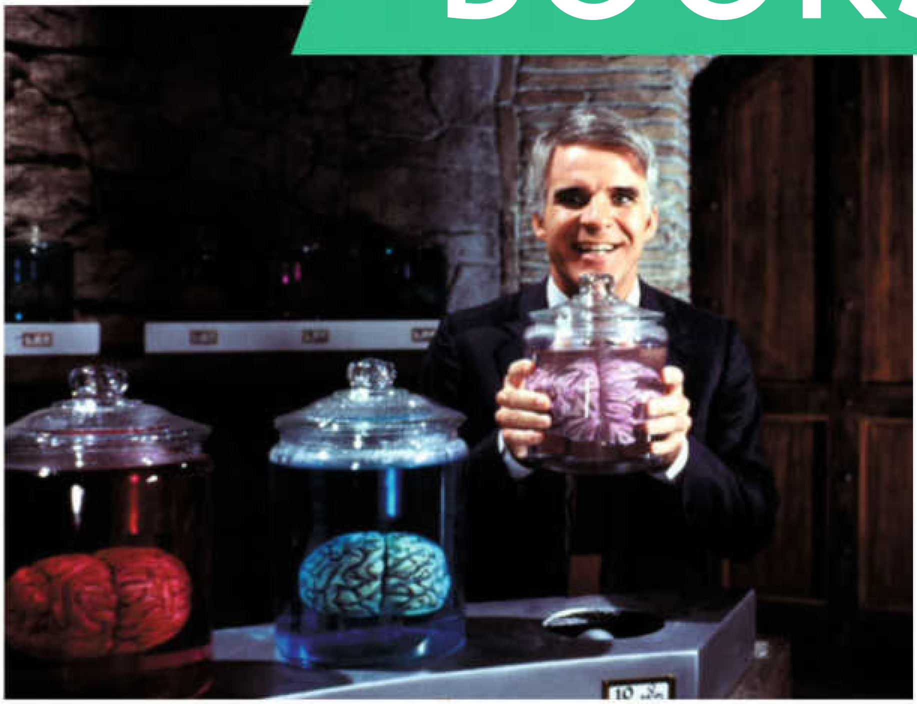
This is Steve and his dog Ted, who have become well known in Dorchester selling The Big Issue. "Steve looks a little bit scary on the outside, a big guy with tattoos, and he's got a fierce-looking dog," says local artist Mike Chapman, "but him and the dog are really sweet. Steve has much more depth than apparent at first glance. That's what I wanted to paint."

The portrait of Steve and Ted is the centrepiece of an exhibition of Chapman's work at Duke's Auctioneers Fine Art Salesroom. "Everybody who walks in goes, 'I know that guy'," says Chapman. "He's a local character, very well known, very well liked."

The picture has sold for £10,000, and Chapman hopes the work will discourage people from judging Big Issue vendors. "People need to see beyond the guy standing out there in the rain. Take another look."

▶ **See more of Mike's work at mikechapmansculptor.com**





The Man With Two Brains: double the quirks?

AUTHOR FEATURE

Mind over matter

Your brain is mindblowingly... flawed. Don't let myths idealising grey matter go to your head, says **Dean Burnett**

The human brain. The most complex known object in the universe. Source of all human endeavour, ambition and imagination. Which may be why our brains are treated with such reverence. The brain is generally considered to be mysterious, unknowable, beyond our ability to comprehend.

Sadly, as is usually the case, science throws cold water on this romanticised notion. Far from being some semi-divine object of barely conceivable perfection, our brains are a hodgepodge of inefficient and illogical systems and processes. This is pretty much what you'd expect for something created by the random and messy processes of evolution.

There are countless examples of the many ways in which the brain does things inefficiently, illogically, or, from an objective point of view, flat out wrongly. For one, our brains regularly overrule our digestive systems when it comes to eating. You'd think our stomach and intestine would be best suited to monitor our dietary intake and control our appetite, and you'd be right. Nonetheless, our brains often subvert the logical setup and decide we should eat more than our fill just because it likes something. Or, even more disturbingly, that we should eat less than we need because we don't look thin enough, resulting in eating disorders.

Our brains also have sophisticated systems to detect and deal with threats. These systems have no doubt kept our species alive over the millennia of our evolution. Unfortunately, our more recently developed cognitive abilities to plan, anticipate and extrapolate mean that pretty much anything can be recognised as a 'threat' or 'danger' these days. Public speaking? Unwashed vegetables? Social interaction? Urinating next to a stranger? Riding in a lift? Any or all of these things can fill people with dread and panic, because our brains 'recognise' some form of potential danger in each (embarrassment, infection, intimidation, entrapment, all things we want to avoid). Annoyingly, our more primitive threat detection systems don't differentiate between a potential threat and an actual one, so set off our fight-or-flight responses in every case, making us highly strung and stressed in response to things that pose no physical danger.

Even fundamental things like our senses are not without flaws. Many assume that our brains receive and process a 100 per cent accurate representation of the world around us, but every one of our five 'main' senses can be fooled. Visual illusions are commonplace but smell, taste, hearing and touch can be confused in the right circumstances.

And even if the brain does manage an accurate representation of what's going on around us, there's no guarantee the memory system will record it as such. Numerous studies have shown that our memories are surprisingly malleable, and can be tweaked and changed in response to external suggestions, extrapolation, even ego. Our brains regularly adjust our memories to make us look better or more important.

There are many more examples of the brain's quirks and eccentricities. But why promote this viewpoint? Why criticise and ridicule something so integral to our very beings? Wouldn't it be better to treat it with total respect?

That's one possibility. But the truth is, this reverence and sense of mystery about the brain has had some negative consequences for us all, resulting in multiple misconceptions about how it actually works.

The idea that the brain is too complex to understand means that when someone does come along with a comprehensible explanation of the brain's workings, it can automatically become more credible and intriguing, so it spreads, despite the fact that it's wrong. Many of these brain myths often contradict each other; people who claim "we only use 10 per cent of our brain" in all seriousness will also believe the "left-brain/right-brain" claims that are depressingly common. So we only use 10 per cent but can state with confidence what both halves are responsible for? Doesn't add up.

A more disconcerting issue is that treating the brain with such reverence means it's far easier to stigmatise people when it does go wrong. "The brain is amazing, and so complex we can't understand it, so if yours isn't working properly, then there must be something seriously wrong with you". But this isn't fair. Everyone's brain gets things wrong countless times every day, so it's only logical that some people's should go more awry than others.

In truth, the brain has countless quirks and irregularities, and these things make us do, say and think the weird things we do. They shouldn't be feared or disparaged, they should be embraced. It means being a functioning human is an achievement in itself.

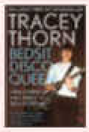
The Idiot Brain by Dean Burnett is out now (Guardian Faber, £12.99)

Photo: Rex Features

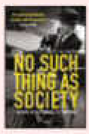
5 BOOKS FOR CHILDREN OF THE 1980s JULIA FORSTER

1. MAGGIE & ME
Damian Barr
A brutally frank and deeply compelling memoir about surviving a childhood of abuse in the Buckfast Triangle of western Scotland during the Thatcher years.

2. LOVE, NINA
Nina Stibbe
It's 1982 and live-in nanny Nina writes letters daily to her sister, detailing her hilarious adventures and comic mishaps being in charge of two boys in the heartland of the London literati.



3. BEDSIT DISCO QUEEN
Tracey Thorn
An honest, funny and fresh memoir from the frontwoman of Everything But the Girl, about breaking into the big time during the 1980s and '90s.



4. NO SUCH THING AS SOCIETY
Andy McSmith
Insightful and comprehensive, this non-fiction book covers everything from politics to pop music, feminism to Fleet Street during the decade that fashion forgot.

5. BLACK SWAN GREEN
David Mitchell
A poignant and thought-provoking novel about a year in the life of 13-year-old Jason Taylor who's dealing with puberty and his parents' separation in a claustrophobic Worcestershire village.

What a Way to Go by Julia Forster is out in paperback (Atlantic Books, £12.99)

QUICKSAND / NOBODY TOLD ME

Mankell's sunset song

Illustration: Dom McKenzie

Birth and death are, of course, two monumental subjects that affect all of us. Both are so commonplace and yet bring about such profound experiences, and that juxtaposition often makes for great books.

This week we're looking at a book from each end of the human experience. First up is the quietly profound **Quicksand** by Henning Mankell. The Swedish novelist died last year from cancer, and this posthumously published book is a thoughtful and insightful collection of short essays, written after the writer received his cancer diagnosis, looking at all aspects of his life and drawing subtle wider conclusions about what makes humans tick.

In keeping with Mankell's prose style in his Wallander novels, the style here is stripped back and matter-of-fact. George Orwell once wrote that good prose should be like a window pane, invisibly conveying the story or thoughts to the reader, and that's exactly what Mankell achieves here.

There are 67 short vignettes about life, love, art, emotion and death, each one starting with a specific event in Mankell's life, and spreading out to make wider points about how people relate to one another and how we understand ourselves in the perspective of the history of the human race.

And there is a lot of perspective here. Mankell talks about the early cave paintings found around the world, and what might have first inspired their artists to depict their lives in a creative fashion.

At the other end of the spectrum, Mankell is very concerned with the legacy we leave behind us. Nuclear waste is a particular concern, and he even visits a storage facility that aims to house the stuff for the next 100,000 years. How do you go about designing such a place, given that no human building has lasted more than a few thousand years in all history?

Elsewhere, there are short ponderings on the nature of art, the human need for charity, war, theatre, literature, health, religion and psychology – all of it delivered in a no-nonsense style, never striving for melodrama or controversy, the author just simply laying out his thoughts in an orderly fashion, and making us think deeply about what it means to live, and to die, as a result.

On the opposite side of life's journey we have **Nobody Told Me** by Hollie McNish. The author is best known as a spoken-word performer, a number of her political and thoughtful pieces having gone viral on the internet.

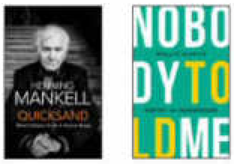
McNish draws big crowds at her events but this is her first foray into published work, and it's a mix of diary entries, thoughts and poetry, all tying in with her pregnancy and the birth of her first child.

Anyone who's seen her live knows that McNish is a charismatic presence – and that translates to the page, her self-effacing candour and honesty coming across as highly refreshing and original.

The writer confesses at the start of the book that this is not a collection of polished poems but rather a scattershot of ideas and ramblings, a chaotic mix of stuff that better reflects the real-life chaos of being a parent for the first time.

That's a neat idea, and the directness is admirable but perhaps a stricter editorial hand might have brought this intriguing book more into focus for the reader. Still very worth reading, though.

Doug Johnstone @doug_johnstone



Quicksand Henning Mankell, hardback, Harvill Secker, £18.99
Nobody Told Me Hollie McNish, hardback, Blackfriars, £13.99

Human Writes

Human Writes is a long established and internationally respected humanitarian organisation befriending prisoners on Death Row in the USA through letter writing. Over 3000 prisoners are currently held in harsh, lonely conditions, and letters from the outside world are often their only contact while they await their execution dates.

In the words of a prisoner ***"Human Writes brought our paths together and for that I will be forever grateful. I now have someone to share my hopes and fears with and I know that when my time comes, someone will care."*** And in the words of a UK penfriend ***"My penfriend's strength and positive attitude in such inhumane conditions are a real example to me and a timely reminder of my own blessings when I get upset about minor problems."***

If you would like to know more about joining our organisation or becoming a penfriend, please send an SAE to

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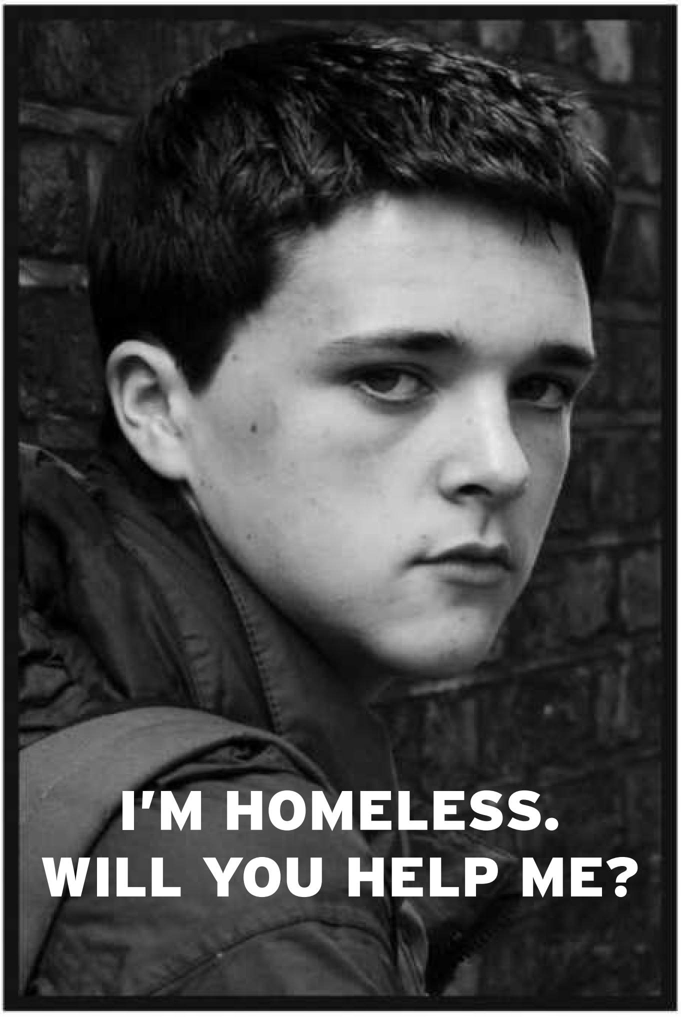
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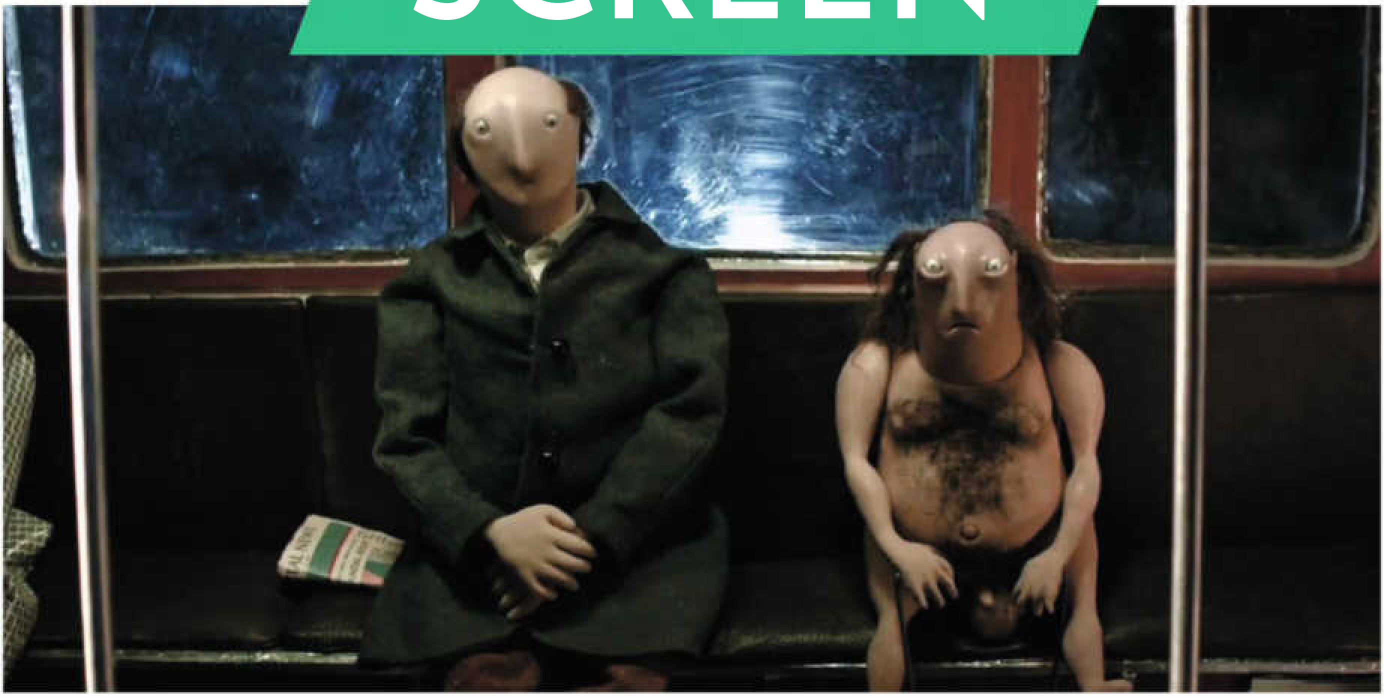

FILM / EDWARD LAWRENSON

Take a shortcut

Spotlighting seven British short films that got Bafta buzzing

This week, the good folks at Bafta are releasing a package of seven short films, all nominated for an award. It's a nice show of support for a breed of film-makers mostly unloved and ignored. Making a short is tough, achieved through a combination of favours from friends in the industry, credit card debt and Kickstarter campaigns, and when these mini opuses are finally unleashed into the world, it's for the briefest of moments. So congratulations to Bafta for giving these fine examples of a struggling genre the decency of a proper cinema run.

But I don't need to appeal to your sense of charity to seek these films out. The **Bafta Shorts 2016** offer a selection of British film-making on dazzling form. Perhaps because shorts are (generally) cheaper than features, they allow for more risk-taking. Take Billy Lumby's *Samuel 6-13*. A character study of a young Hasidic Jewish man from London's Stamford Hill, this 15-minute drama is a conventional enough coming-of-age tale. But the approach – an exhilarating mismatch of woozy handheld camerawork, on-the-hoof documentary and artfully scrappy editing – is bold and original. Lumby is now developing his first feature; let's hope he doesn't have to water down the stylistic exuberance amply demonstrated here. The other live-action drama, Caroline Bartleet's *Operator*, is more flatly conventional but it features a terrific performance from Kate Dickie as a fire service 999 agent handling a distressing call (it went on to win the actual Bafta for best short).

More restrained but no less inventive is Callum Rice's documentary, *Mining Poems or Odes*. An impressionistic portrait of Robert Fullerton – a former welder in a Govan shipyard who is now a prolific Glaswegian poet – this beautifully filmed piece is a rich and sympathetic study of a fascinating man. A neat embodiment of the less-is-more maxim of short films, it also, over the course of 11 minutes, manages to resonate more widely as a reflection on creativity, working-class masculinity and Glasgow's industrial legacy.

Jörn Threlfall's *Over* isn't strictly speaking a documentary but a powerful re-enactment of a true-life tragedy that, to avoid spoilers, I won't reveal here. In mostly static shots of a suburban street in London, Threlfall restages the impact of this traumatic event with sorrowful detachment. It's an eerie, poignant work, evoking early Michael Haneke with a touch of Bruegel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*.

Short-film animation has always flourished (the process is too expensive and labour-intensive to attract much feature financing). There are two super animated shorts included here from emerging directors, both students at the National Film and Television School. Simon Cartwright's *Manoman* (pictured) is a darkly comic stop-motion blend of David Cronenberg and RD Laing, about a timid sad-sack who releases his rampaging inner id under the influence of primal therapy, and Nina Gantz's *Edmond* is an unsettling grown-up fairytale about the childhood of a disturbed loner (the latter won the best animation Bafta).

Finally, *Prologue* rather undermines Bafta's invitation for us to 'discover new film-making talent': its director is the veteran 82-year-old Richard Williams, the man behind the animated sequences of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. Telling of a fight-to-the-death between combatants from Ancient Greece, it's a stunning work of traditional, line-drawn animation – worth the price of a ticket alone.

The eyes have it: Chiwetel Ejiofor and Nicole Kidman

FINAL REEL...

The 2009 Argentine film **The Secret in Their Eyes** was an expertly crafted thriller about a prosecutor investigating an unresolved case from his past. Chiwetel Ejiofor, Nicole Kidman and Julia Roberts have assembled for an American version with none of the original's allure. An object example of a unnecessary remake.

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WEEK IN GEEK

WOLVERINE'S CLAWS COULD BE CLIPPED. THE SIMPSONS GET SET TO GO LIVE. D'OH!

After *Deadpool*'s massive success, lots of other comic book-inspired films are queuing up to follow suit. But *Spawn*, *The Wolverine 3* and *X-Force* could all get a harsh R rating in the US.

Julianne Moore is in talks to join the *Kingsman: The Secret Service* sequel. She might play the villain – if she can fit the film into her busy schedule, that is.

It seems *Predator 4* is finally getting a move on – a teaser promo image was released last week. Shane Black – currently putting the finishing touches to *The Nice Guys* – is set to direct.

Meanwhile, get ready for an annual fix of *Transformers*. *Transformers 5* is out next summer, a Bumblebee character spin-off film is due in 2018, and *Transformers 6* will follow in 2019. Don't forget your earplugs.

Finally, an upcoming instalment of *The Simpsons* will feature a live segment. The last three minutes of the episode, out on May 15, will be reserved for Homer Simpson taking live questions. Should be interesting!

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FOCUS

Local heroes

Bill Forsyth, Scotland's greatest film director, takes a shot at the nation's identity problem

There are plenty of Scottish actors and writers working in the movie business but strangely few directors. Search for 'Scottish film director' and top of the list is Bill Forsyth, who hasn't made a film this century and is remembered primarily for two made in the early 1980s, *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero*. Such is the rarity of quality films made in Scotland by Scottish auteurs that these are still celebrated as ones that forged the character of the nation.

"I wasn't flying the flag for Scotland," Forsyth says. "I wasn't trying to say something culturally about Scotland – I don't know what Scotland means to the guy next to me on the bus. It's too dumb an idea to want to nail. A culture comes from making stuff, and the accumulation of that stuff finally reflects a culture."

Yet, in the wake of the independence referendum, political rhetoric has been obsessed by attempting to define a notion of nationalism.

"Scotland's always been one of these little countries that's had an identity problem," Forsyth says. "It's either had an inferiority complex or the opposite. It's just a little schizophrenic nation like most little nations seeking an identity. There's nothing awfully special about it, it's a place where people live and get on with things."

But isn't *Local Hero* about a representative of a Texan oil company who comes to Scotland to buy over a village's beach but is won over by the place and its people?

"It's not about the landscape and the people in that sense," Forsyth corrects, "it's about what a life is. It's a very ordinary metaphor – someone who doesn't have a lot of identity coming to a place and demanding people sell their lives to him. The ecology movement was just kicking off then. I got to know quite a few of the instigators of Greenpeace. They said it was a key film because it set out the language of green issues. Environmental issues had a little novelty then but we're living with them daily now."

Dee Hepburn (Dorothy) and John Gordon Sinclair (Gregory) star in *Gregory's Girl*, 1981

After *Local Hero*, Forsyth made *Comfort and Joy*, a lost gem. Bill Paterson plays a local radio DJ in Glasgow who gets mixed up in a rivalry between two ice-cream impresarios. "It's a serious comedy," Forsyth explains. "That was the tag I invented for it. The film business is such an obvious one, everything has to be labelled. Any comedy worth its salt is serious because that's what comedy is, a way of dealing with things. Comedy is not about making people laugh, it's about engaging people. I wouldn't have made movies if it was a superficial matter of entertaining people."

> **"I wasn't flying the flag. I was trying to say something culturally. I don't know what Scotland means"**

Little did Forsyth know *Comfort and Joy* reflected a much darker, real-life ice-cream war going on in the city through the 1980s, as violence between rival gangs using ice-cream vans to distribute drugs escalated.

"It was something I wasn't aware of," he says. "The first idea I had for the film was the 'local DJ'. When local stations started, it was the first time we had the phenomenon of the local celebrity, famous in a radius of 10 miles, who'd open supermarkets. I knew I needed more, and it was Peter Capaldi, who comes from an ice-cream family in Glasgow, who told me stories of what happened. But the way he was telling it, the rivalry was simply over who had the best ice cream..."

At this point an actual ice-cream van serendipitously drives past the window, making Forsyth chuckle. Removed from the industry, it seems unlikely Scotland's most famous film-maker will direct another movie. "I don't know how people could get away with making the films I made any more," he says. "It's so codified now – you need this kind of character, you need that kind of arc – film-makers have been spoon-feeding the audiences and that's what you have to do. It's uninteresting to me, I must admit."

Comfort and Joy is out on Blu-ray and DVD on February 29
Interview: Steven MacKenzie @stevenmackenzie

BROADCAST VIEWS

SAM DELANEY

It's a shame about Ray, so think of it as 'The Dude That Busted Heads'

If you own a telly and a full package of on-demand channels then you need a pretty stringent set of guidelines to help shape your viewing habits. If not, it's total chaos. You've got access to about a billion shows, and having a scattergun approach to which ones you watch will eventually send you crazy or stupid or dead.

For instance, I have a rule that I never watch British-made dramas. British dramas rarely have guns in them so, really, have got no right calling themselves 'dramas' in the first place. If there's no chance of anyone ever being shot in the face then who can muster the energy to keep watching?

Here's another of my rules: I never watch a show with a person's name as the title. That was why I always swerved *Ray Donovan* whenever my smart TV had the temerity to recommend it. *Ray Donovan* sounded lazy. It sounded like a show that was probably about a forensic expert. Or a detective who had psychic powers. If the writers couldn't even be bothered to think of a decent title, then it seemed unlikely they would be able to think of a plot worth its salt.

But titles can be deceiving. Because *Ray Donovan* is freaking amazing. So amazing that I now don't even refer to it as *Ray Donovan* any more. I call it 'RD'. And I can assure you that I only abbreviate the names of shows I really hold in the highest esteem.

What's it about? It's about a dude called Ray Donovan (Liev Schreiber) who works as an unscrupulous Mr Fixit for Hollywood stars. Are you a rapper who's woken up next to a dead hooker? Ray will make the body disappear. Are you an action-film hero trying to hide your predilection for sex with trannies? Ray will beat up the hacks who are threatening to break the scandal. Ray is a cool dude from a roughneck Boston family who came to Hollywood to bust heads and get rich.

But like Tony Soprano and Don Draper before him, he is torn between his demons and his other life as a family man, with a wife and kids he loves and wants to make happy. He also has a jailbird dad, played brilliantly by Jon Voight, who is trying to worm his way back into the clan.

Ray Donovan is deftly written, relentlessly compelling and wonderfully acted by a sensational cast (James Woods and Elliott Gould also star). It's a rare case of a great show with a shit title. They should really have called it something more befitting of its brilliance – like 'Hollywood Hothead', 'Ray Gun' or 'The Dude That Busted Heads'.

@DelaneyMan

OUT AND ABOUT

DEVOUR THIS!

It's a leap year, so we effectively get an extra day this week. Make the most of it by squeezing an extra 24 hours of culture into your life.

Jewish Book Week (until February 28, King's Cross, London; kingsplace.co.uk) draws to a close this week and has authors (Tracy Chevalier, Esther Freud), biochemists (Nick Lane), historians (Margaret MacMillan, Antony Beevor, Edith Hall, Tessa Rajak) and film critics (Jason Solomons) among others talking about their work, their favourite subjects and Jewish identity.

Away from the literary, there is plenty of art to see this week. **Delacroix & the Rise of Modern Art** (until May 22, Trafalgar Square, London; nationalgallery.org.uk) explains the importance of the French painter (a detail of his work *Lion Hunt*, 1881, is featured above). His impact on the first half of the 19th century was explosive – the shockwaves of which are still being felt today, helping pave the way for impressionism.

Less cataclysmic but no less alluring is the exhibition **Projecting Identity in 17th-century Portraiture** (until May 15, Birmingham; barber.org.uk). Exploring how portraiture was used to assert status and project individuality in the 17th century, this display features prints, drawings and miniatures.

Hartlepool artist **Laura Lancaster** (until May 8, Walsall; thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk) has a collection of her work on display, in which she takes lost or discarded photographs and home movies (that she has found in charity shops, flea markets and eBay) and reworks them, giving them a new meaning unshackled from their original context and intention.

New Art West Midlands (February 26–April 24, Coventry; theherbert.org) showcases the exciting work of graduates from art schools in the local area. The pieces sit across photography, painting, sculpture and sound.

Staying in the Midlands but importing from Belgium, **Jan Vanriet the Music Boy** (until May 8, Walsall; thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk) is the first British exhibition of the Belgian artist and poet's work. His parents met in the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, and his work traces this fact through his family's subsequent history. His work draws on themes of love, loss, identity and dislocation, considering the repercussions of the war on individuals and the family unit.

Outings (February 25 & 26, Leicester; curveonline.co.uk) is a show about coming out, which debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe. A rotating cast of four actors recount 20 real-life stories of individuals coming out to their friends and family. Funny, poignant, rousing, heartbreaking, profound – all human life and all human emotions are here.

Eamonn Forde

MUSIC

CLASSICAL / DAVID FAY

Surround sounds

What does it mean to be human in the 21st century? It's a huge question but one that London's Southbank Centre plans to address throughout 2017.

The Centre – along with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under its principal conductor Vladimir Jurowski – will host a year-long festival, **Belief and Beyond Belief**, exploring fundamental questions of humanity through music, literature, performance and discussion. This ambitious project, the focus of eight weekends across next year, was announced at the Southbank Centre's 2016/17 Classical Music Season launch late last month, alongside an impressive billing of performers.

Names like Martha Argerich, Mitsuko Uchida and Maurizio Pollini – to name but three pianists – are bound to turn heads but what really excites me is this season's emphasis on exploration. Not only does *Belief and Beyond Belief* probe profound existential questions – but new partnerships, technologies and initiatives will be explored in a concerted attempt to widen accessibility to classical music. Think classical music is old-fashioned? Check out the Philharmonia Orchestra's virtual reality initiative, which takes you inside the orchestra as it performs a Sibelius symphony. Think classical music is for middle-class, white people? Come to one of the concerts given by the Southbank's newest Associate Orchestra, Chineke!, the UK's first professional black and minority ethnic orchestra. Think classical music is expensive and for old people? Grab one of the 1000 free tickets available for under-30s or one of the 95,000 that cost less than £20.

Lithuanian conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla

The Southbank Centre is not the only large arts complex in the capital to announce its new season. Its City rival the Barbican has also recently unveiled its plans. A celebration of the milestone birthdays of three living US composers – Steve Reich, Philip Glass and John Adams – promises a season underscored by the rhythmic propulsion of minimalism. Opera heartthrob Jonas Kaufmann, who was showered with women's underwear at last September's *Last Night of the Proms*, will be in residence with a 10-day stint next February. The sensational German tenor will perform Act I of *Die Walküre* alongside Karita Mattila and the LSO, as well as a rarely heard tenor version of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with the BBCSO. Modern opera plays an important role in the season, with Gerald Finley performing the title role of Adams' *Doctor Atomic* and the European premiere of Gerald Barry's new opera *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*.

Take in a virtual reality tour of the Philharmonia Orchestra

Tickets for the Barbican's new season are now on sale and, come Tuesday this week, so too will be those for the Southbank season. It might all seem a long way off but there's nothing wrong with a bit of forward planning, is there?

LAST NOTE...

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has announced Lithuanian conductor **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** as its next music director. It's an appointment to celebrate: at under 30 years old, she follows in the youthful footsteps of Simon Rattle and Andris Nelsons.

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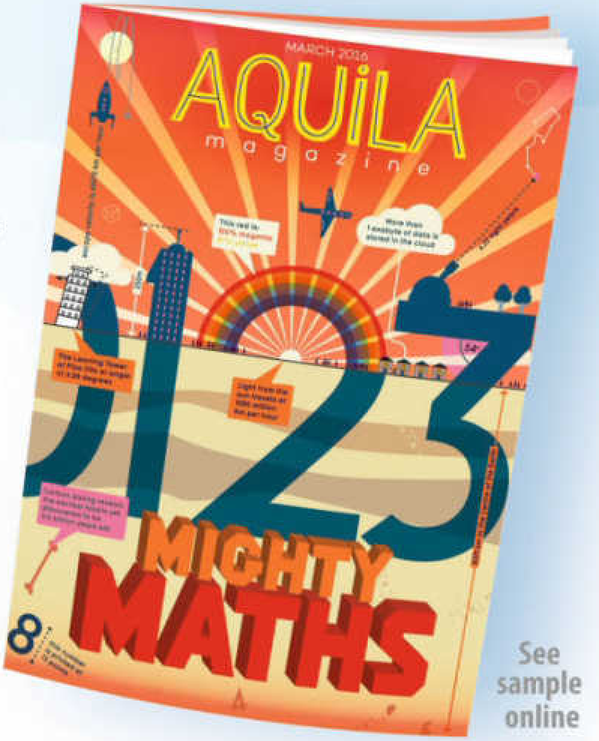

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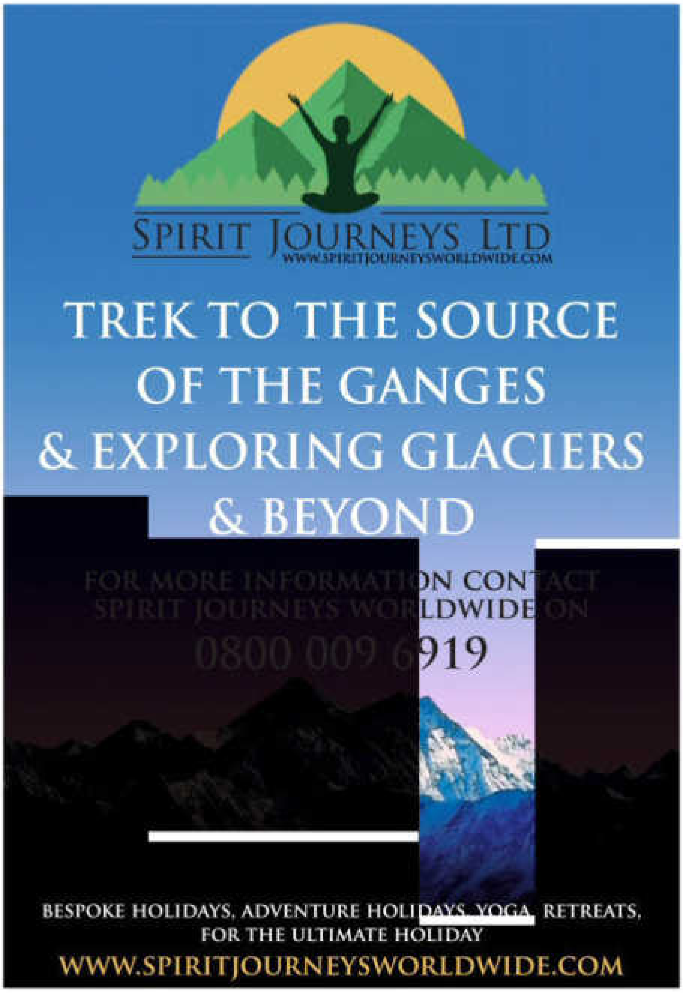

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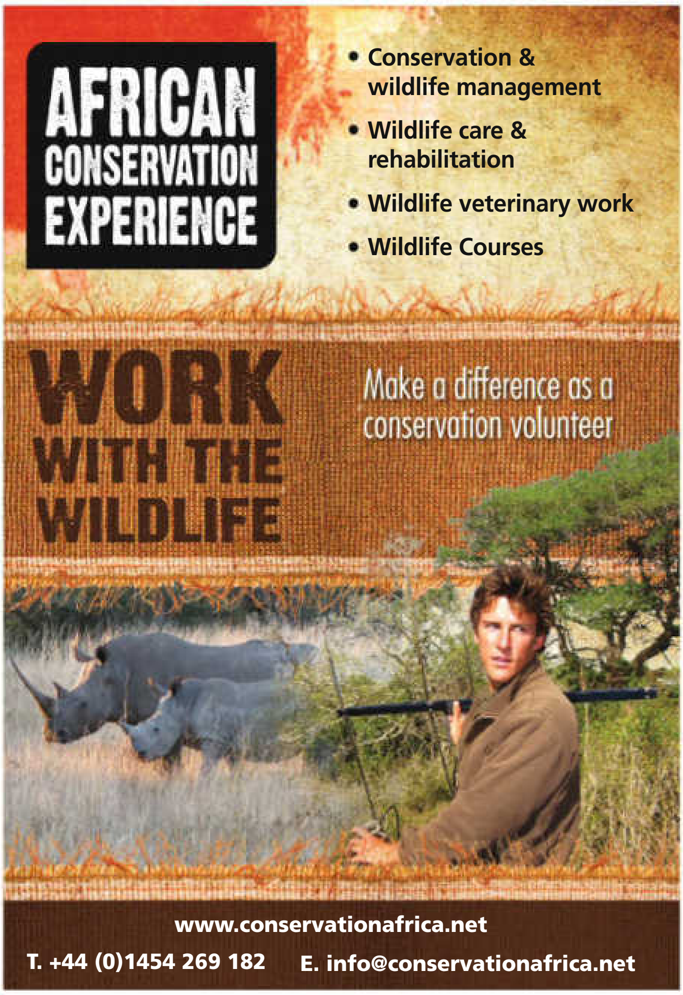

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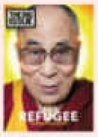

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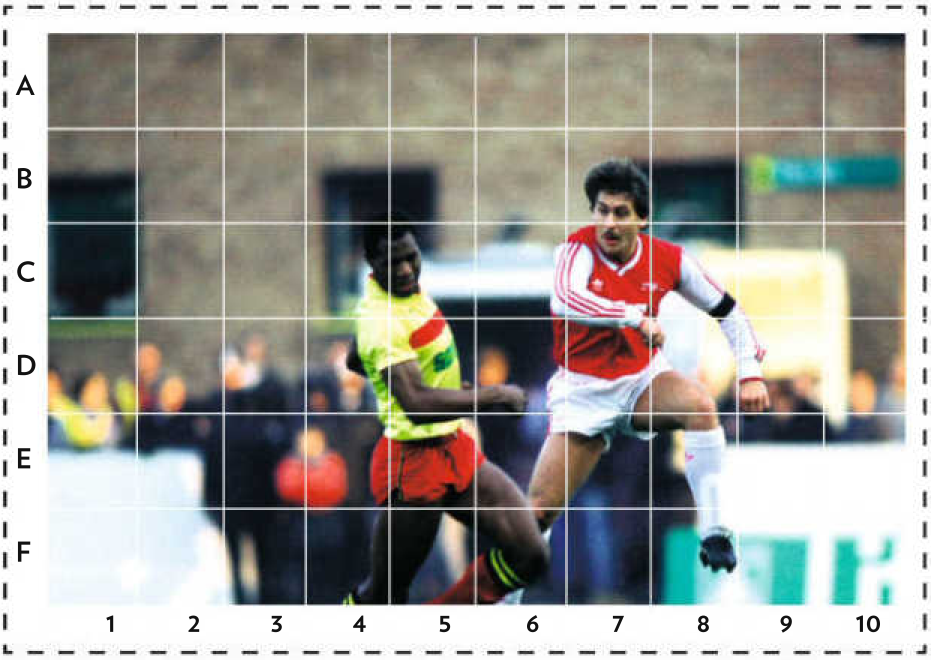

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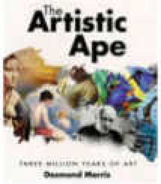


To win *The Artistic Ape*, by Desmond Morris, mark where you think the ball is, cut out and send to: Spot the Ball (1193), 2nd Floor, 43 Bath St, Glasgow, G2 1HW by March 1. Include name, address and phone number. To enter by email, send your grid position (eg A1) to competitions@bigissue.com. Issue 1191 winner is Audrey Spratt from Ballygowan.

(Last week's Spot the Ball revealed: Liverpool v Everton, 1984)

Brain Teaser

Here's a mouthwatering question.
Which of the following milkshakes would you rather drink?

Raspberry milkshake
(100g fresh raspberries, 150ml skimmed milk, 10g sugar)

Chocolate milkshake
(200ml chocolate ice-cream, 50ml full-fat milk, 50ml cream)

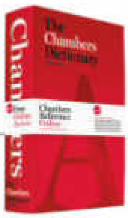
Oh, before you decide, just one more thing. Does it make a difference if you had to make the milkshake yourself or had it made for you?

Incredibly, for most people, yes, it seems to. When this study was done under lab conditions (participants made their own shake or had it presented to them by an experimenter), a surprising pattern emerged. For the healthy raspberry shake (189 calories), people who made their own shake rated it as tastier than those who had it made for them. But for the unhealthy chocolate shake (499 calories), people who made their own shake rated it as less tasty than those who had it made for them.

The lesson is clear: if you want to indulge, eat out. But if you're trying to be healthy, make your own!

Discover new truths in our weekly test, based on Dr Ben Ambridge's book, *PSY-Q*, a series of interactive tests of your personality, intelligence, moral values, thinking style, impulsivity, skill at drawing, capacity for logical reasoning, musical taste, multi-tasking ability, susceptibility to illusions (both visual and mental) and preferences in a romantic partner. Courtesy of Profile Books

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



SUDOKU

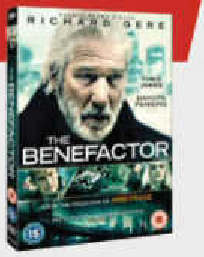
		3	5					
2		7	4			9		
	9	8					3	2
	4					7	6	
9								4
			2					
			1	3		8	2	
7				4				
				5	6			

ISSUE 1192 SOLUTION

6	8	1	2	9	4	7	3	5
9	3	4	5	6	7	2	1	8
7	5	2	8	3	1	9	4	6
8	9	6	7	5	3	4	2	1
3	1	7	4	2	8	6	5	9
4	2	5	6	1	9	8	7	3
5	7	8	1	4	6	3	9	2
2	4	3	9	8	5	1	6	7
1	6	9	3	7	2	5	8	4

There is just one simple rule in sudoku: each row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain the numbers one to nine. This is a logic puzzle and you should not need to guess. The solution will be revealed next week.

WIN!



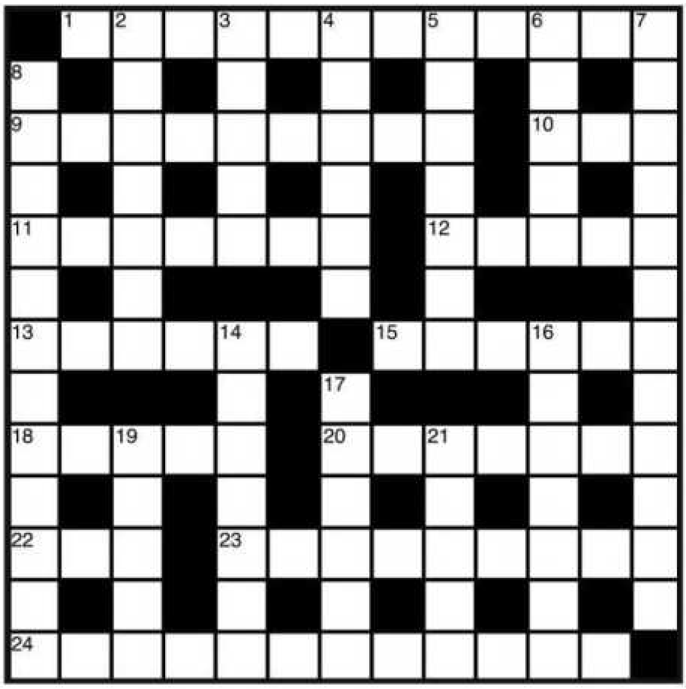
RICHARD GERE FILM THE BENEFACTOR

The Benefactor is a dramatic and affecting thriller that follows one man's downward spiral. Five years after Olivia's (Dakota Fanning) parents are killed in a car crash that was Franny's (*Pretty Woman* idol Richard Gere) fault, he becomes obsessed with Olivia and her new husband Luke (Theo James). Franny, a powerful, mysterious and possessive philanthropist, tries to relieve the pain and loss he feels through them – but the stress and grief resurfaces, and his addictions lead him into an inevitable downward spiral.

We have five copies of *The Benefactor* to be won on DVD. To enter, tell us: **which star of *Pretty Woman* plays Franny in *The Benefactor*?**

Send answers with THE BENEFACTOR as the subject to competitions@bigissue.com or post to The Big Issue, 43 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 1HW. Include your name and address. Closing date is March 1. Include OPT OUT if you don't want to receive updates from The Big Issue. We will not pass your details to any third party. For full T&Cs see bigissue.com

PRIZE CROSSWORD



To win a Chambers Dictionary, send completed crosswords (either cryptic or quick) to: The Big Issue Crossword (1193), second floor, 43 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 1HW by March 1. Include your name, address and phone number. Issue 1191 winner is Lola Barns from Colchester.

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

1. One cannot have this drink in the morning (9,3)
9. Thief running wild in scarlet (9)
10. Legalised part for a young lady (3)
11. Surprisingly dead Red is greatly feared (7)
12. Return of drink in the marketplace (5)
13. Early enough at home with a boy from the east (2,4)
15. Puts back alternative while in a dazed condition (6)
18. Gently put some wax round part of the flower (5)
20. Odds on lady being in charge in the round (7)
22. Fool on a ship (3)
23. Prisoners teach by force (9)
24. Rapper sensed altered state of readiness (12)

Down

2. One of a number of penalties in game (7)
3. Put right in the Mendips (5)
4. Diana's transformed the water nymphs (6)
5. Excluded from participation without a chance (3,2,2)
6. Hesitantly touch first wild animal (5)
7. Everybody's being welcomed with open arms – it's comprehensive (3-9)
8. Eastern talisman enjoyed by rubber! (8,4)
14. Mother left bill with accountant for a walking stick (7)
16. Maybe I leave sapphire design (7)
17. Sue can be affected by an old custom (6)
19. Stick on the farther side of the point (5)
21. Discover success is working (3,2)

QUICK CLUES

Across

1. Utterly absurd (12)
9. Excellent thing (slang) (9)
10. Sly person (3)
11. Enjoy to excess (7)
12. Vexed (5)
13. Intertwine (6)
15. Ear of maize (6)
18. Gustav -----, composer (5)
20. Make a mistake (7)
22. Tease good-naturedly (3)
23. Custom (9)
24. Psychiatrist (inf.) (12)

Down

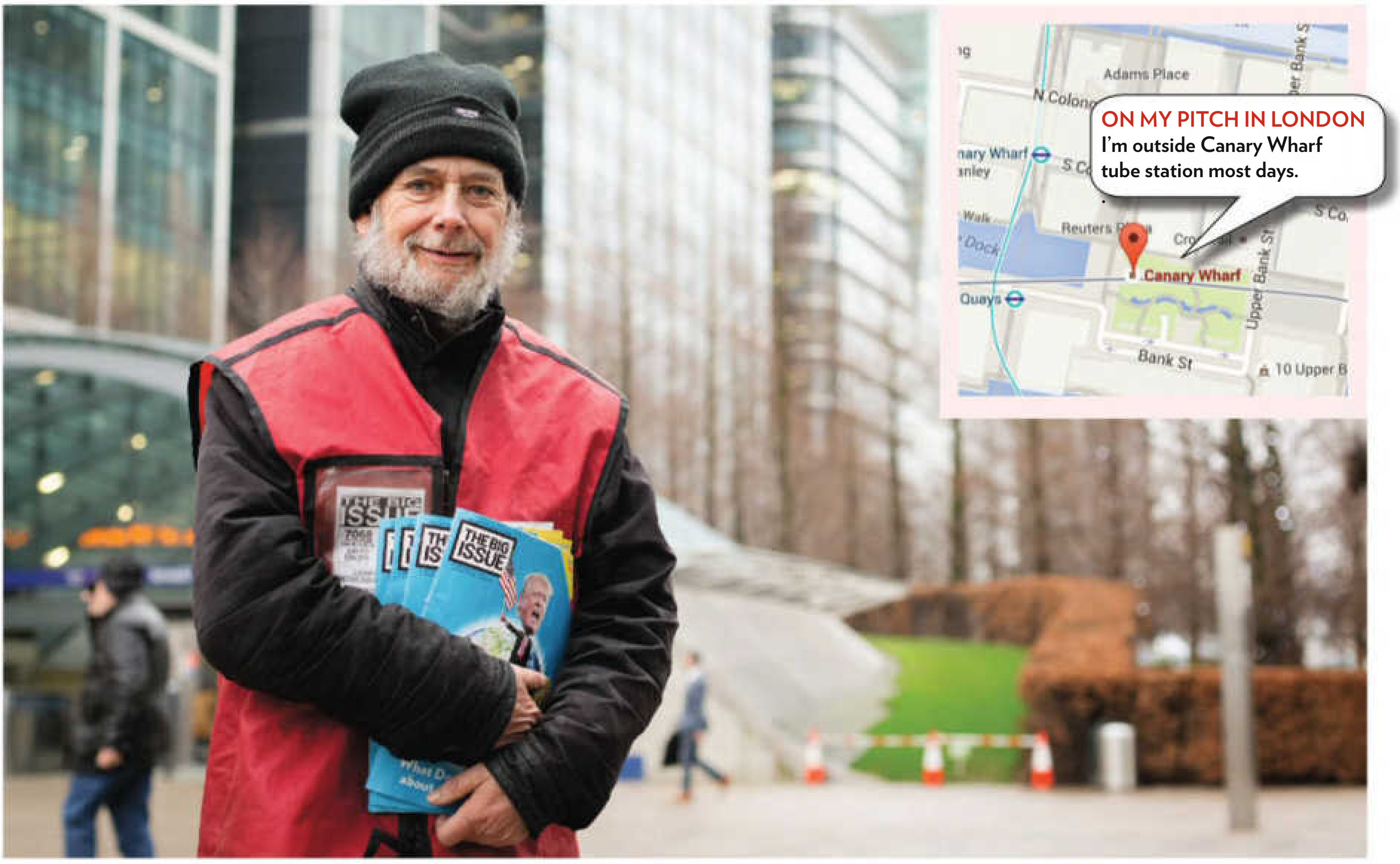
2. Moslem fast (7)
3. Small bottle (5)
4. Design (anag.) (6)
5. Otalgia (7)
6. Get the better of (5)
7. Dodging (12)
8. Town near Bournemouth (12)
14. Understatement (7)
16. Camp lavatory (7)
17. Weaken (6)
19. North African republic (5)
21. Descendant (5)

Issue 1192 solution

CRYPTIC: Across – 1 Tided over; 6 Dip; 8 Plain language; 9 Image; 10 Daytime; 11 Posing; 13 Spigot; 16 Embargo; 18 Paled; 20 Scrape through; 22 Dry; 23 Readdress. Down – 1 Tip; 2 Diana; 3 Dungeon; 4 Viands; 5 Rugby; 6 Drawing; 7 Presented; 9 Impressed; 12 Soberly; 14 Papered; 15 Contra; 17 Riper; 19 Louse; 21 His.

QUICK: Across – 1 Merganser; 6 Cwm; 8 Refrigeration; 9 Aired; 10 Cottage; 11 Ledger; 13 Ormolu; 16 Narwhal; 18 Salon; 20 Song of Solomon; 22 Poe; 23 Hotheaded. Down – 1 Mar; 2 Refer; 3 Ariadne; 4 Sketch; 5 React; 6 Chicago; 7 Mannequin; 9 All ends up; 12 Derange; 14 Resolve; 15 Closet; 17 Hooch; 19 Lamed; 21 Nod.

MY PITCH



ON MY PITCH IN LONDON
I'm outside Canary Wharf tube station most days.

Michael Costello, 71

"A surprising number of well-educated people have ended up in my situation"

FACTS ABOUT ME...

MY FAVOURITE BOOK
Diary Spiritual and Earthly of James Johnston by James Johnstoun. I have a strong Christian faith, and there's much to take from this inspiring book.

I AM VERY FOND OF...
India. In my 50s I spent six weeks in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. It was a truly wonderful experience – probably my fondest memory.

I was squatting when I began to sell The Big Issue. I'd found it really difficult to find work for a long time. A friend of mine suggested that I start selling the magazine.

I was really quite embittered by my failure to get work. Over a period of time I suppose I'd become dispirited and neglectful – I was failing to take care of myself. Selling the magazine picked me up. Aside from giving me an income, I enjoy chatting to customers, some of whom I now consider friends. And I now have a place to live, and I'm very, very lucky to have a wonderful partner whom I love very dearly.

Much of my time is spent rescuing animals. It all began when I was living in Aberdeen in Scotland. One day I found an injured seagull in the road. I found it a comfortable place under some advertising hoarding, before taking it to an animal sanctuary.

After that I made a rule that I'd never pass by on the other side of the road. The suffering of animals is something I became very concerned by – your eye becomes trained to spotting it. Over the years I've helped injured seagulls, pigeons, wren and other garden birds. Unusual birds I've helped include a moorhen and a woodcock. A parakeet bit me once.

These days a group called London Wildlife Protection will often phone me, and get me round to help someone in the area who has rescued an animal. I'm very happy to do it, even if it takes up a fair bit of time at my age.

My life has featured a series of misfortunes but perhaps not the way people might assume. I was born in Dublin but I moved to Scotland and I have a first-class honours degree in psychology from the University of Aberdeen. I then did a PhD in the psychology of visual movement perception.

I think a surprising number of well-educated people have ended up in my situation. I do know that homelessness and unemployment is a terrible waste of everyone's talents and abilities.

Experience has taught me there is no reason to look down on Big Issue vendors, or anyone in trouble, because all human beings are equally valuable, whoever they are and whatever kind of misfortunes they endure.

Interview: Adam Forrest
Photo: Travis Hodges

DID YOU SEE JOHN?

Have a look at page 32. Did you see him? Or did you look past him and carry on with your life?

Sponsor a room – just 40p a day

Like many of the homeless young people who come to Centrepoint, John is no stranger to being ignored. When he was just four his father walked out and the attention he got from his mum was far from hugs and kisses.

She showed him no affection and even his earliest memories were of her violence towards him. *"When I was five, Mum kicked me hard in the stomach. She was always shouting and would become violent."*

"I'd developed a nervous tick, but mum threatened to hurt me if I let anything show…It was too much to handle, too much commotion".

At 15 John started sleeping down by the canal and in a derelict high rise flat. Lonely and terrified, he turned to drink, self-harming and even became suicidal. When he finally ended up in hospital, his mother's response was to fly off on holiday. He'd never felt so rejected.

While John's story may sound shocking to you, many of the homeless young people who come to Centrepoint have been through similar experiences. They find themselves homeless after being victims of neglect, violence, sexual abuse and family breakdown.

By giving just 40p a day (£12 a month) you can get a vulnerable homeless person off the streets right now. You'll give them a room of their own and all the support they need to rebuild their life.

They'll receive counselling to deal with their problems, career advice to help them into college or a job, and basic life skills, such as how to budget and pay bills. So, when they're ready to leave, they can live independently.

Many people don't give homeless people like John a second glance, but today you can be the person who chooses not to ignore them.

Thanks to someone like you, John is now safe at Centrepoint.

Sponsor a room at Centrepoint.

Call 0800 138 4499
Visit centrepointroom.org.uk
or return the form below

Why become a Centrepoint Room Sponsor?

- For just 40p a day, you could help a young person escape homelessness forever
- You'll receive a welcome pack and regular updates about the progress of young people you're supporting
- 89% of young people who come through Centrepoint go on to find education, employment or their own home
- 85p of every pound we spend goes directly towards services for homeless young people

centre point give homeless young people a future

Your regular gift will be used to assist young people in sponsored rooms and for the general purposes of Centrepoint – working with homeless and socially excluded young people.

Will you sponsor a Centrepoint room and get a homeless young person off the streets for good?

☐ **I wish to sponsor a room at £12 a month**
☐ **I wish to sponsor two rooms at £24 a month**
☐ **I wish to sponsor ____ rooms at £ ________ a month**

Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (please circle preferred date)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit DIRECT Debit

To The Manager: Originators Identification No. 6 5 9 1 0 7
Name and full address of your Bank or Building Society:

Postcode
Name(s) of Account Holder(s)
Bank Sort Code: ☐☐-☐☐-☐☐ Account Number: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay Centrepoint Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Centrepoint and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account

To protect the privacy of those we help, a model has been used for the photograph and the name has been changed.
The story however is true and as told by a young person.

RAP1516B-17D

Full Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Email

In accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act, Centrepoint will use your personal data to process your donation. By providing your telephone number and email address you agree that Centrepoint may contact you on occasion about your donations by telephone, SMS/or email. If you do not want to receive this information please write to Supporter Care, Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London E1 8DZ. We will never sell or share your details with other organisations.

Under the Government's Gift Aid scheme, all donations made by UK tax payers are worth a quarter more.
To make your gift go further, just tick the box and date

giftaid it

☐ I would like Centrepoint to reclaim the tax I have paid on all donations I have made in the four years prior to this year, and any donations I may make in the future. I am a UK taxpayer. I am paying at least as much in income and/or capital gains tax in a year as will be reclaimed by all charities to which I give in that tax year.

Date / /

Please return this form to: Centrepoint Room Sponsorship
Freepost ANG 2640, Colchester, CO2 8BR. Thank you

give with confidence

centre point

Registered Charity No 292411 RAP1516B-17D

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Which? members
'Best Mattress Retailers' survey (2015)

THE SUNDAY TIMES
BEST GREEN COMPANIES
WINNERS 4 YEARS RUNNING

The Observer
'ETHICAL RETAILER OF THE YEAR'
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